

COLLECTED PLAYS

VOL. II

JOHN DRINKWATER

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The Collected Plays  
of John Drinkwater



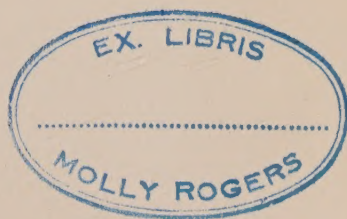




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The Collected Plays  
of John Drinkwater  
Volume II

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∴ The music for the songs in "Oliver Cromwell" was composed by George Drinkwater.





# *Abraham Lincoln*



TO  
THE LORD CHARNWOOD

*THE CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF THEIR  
APPEARANCE ARE—*

TWO CHRONICLERS	CALEB SMITH
MR STONE	BURNET HOOK
MR CUFFNEY	GIDEON WELLES
SUSAN DEDDINGTON	MRS GOLIATH BLOW
MRS LINCOLN	MRS OTHERLY
ABRAHAM LINCOLN	FREDERICK DOUGLASS
WILLIAM TUCKER	EDWIN STANTON
HENRY HIND	GENERAL GRANT
ELIAS PRICE	CAPTAIN MALINS
JAMES MACINTOSH	DENNIS
WILLIAM SEWARD	AN OFFICER
JOHNSON WHITE	WILLIAM SCOTT
CALEB JENNINGS	FIRST SOLDIER
HAWKINS	SECOND SOLDIER
THREE CLERKS	GENERAL MEADE
MR SLANEY	CAPTAIN SONE
A MESSENGER	GENERAL LEE
SALMON CHASE	AN OFFICER OF HIS STAFF
MONTGOMERY BLAIR	JOHN WILKES BOOTH
SIMON CAMERON	A DOCTOR

*Ladies and Gentlemen*



# *Abraham Lincoln*

*Two Chroniclers.*

*The two speaking together.* Kinsmen, you shall  
behold

Our stage, in mimic action, mould  
A man's character.

This is the wonder, always, everywhere—  
Not that vast mutability which is event,  
The pits and pinnacles of change,  
But man's desire and valiance that range  
All circumstance, and come to port unspent.

Agents are these events, these ecstasies,  
And tribulations, to prove the purities  
Of poor oblivions that are our being. When  
Beauty and peace possess us, they are none  
But as they touch the beauty and peace of men,  
Nor, when our days are done,  
And the last utterance of doom must fall,  
Is the doom anything  
Memorable for its apparelling ;  
The bearing of man facing it is all.

So, kinsmen, we present,  
This for no loud event

That is but fugitive,  
But that you may behold  
Our mimic action mould  
The spirit of man immortally to live.

*First Chronicler.* Once when a peril touched the  
days  
Of freedom in our English ways,  
And none renowned in government  
Was equal found,  
Came to the steadfast heart of one,  
Who watched in lonely Huntingdon,  
A summons, and he went,  
And tyranny was bound,  
And Cromwell was the lord of his event.

*Second Chronicler.* And in that land where  
voyaging  
The pilgrim Mayflower came to rest,  
Among the chosen, counselling,  
Once, when bewilderment possessed  
A people, none there was might draw  
To fold the wandering thoughts of men,  
And make as one the names again  
Of liberty and law.

And then, from fifty fameless years  
In quiet Illinois was sent

A word that still the Atlantic hears,  
And Lincoln was the lord of his event.

Abraham  
Lincoln

*The two speaking together.* So the uncounted spirit  
wakes  
To the birth  
Of uncounted circumstance.  
And time in a generation makes  
Portents majestic a little story of earth  
To be remembered by chance  
At a fire-side.  
But the ardours that they bear,  
The proud and invincible motions of character—  
These—these abide.

## SCENE I

*The Parlour of Abraham Lincoln's House at Springfield, Illinois, early in 1860. Mr Stone, a farmer, and Mr Cuffney, a store-keeper, both men of between fifty and sixty, are sitting before an early spring fire. It is dusk, but the curtains are not drawn. The men are smoking silently.*

*Mr Stone (after a pause).* Abraham. It's a good name for a man to bear, anyway.

*Mr Cuffney.* Yes. That's right.

*Mr Stone* (after another pause). Abraham Lincoln. I've known him forty years. Never crooked once. Well.

[*He taps his pipe reflectively on the grate.*  
*There is another pause. Susan, a servant-maid, comes in, and busies herself lighting candles and drawing the curtains to.*

*Susan.* Mrs Lincoln has just come in. She says she'll be here directly.

*Mr Cuffney.* Thank you.

*Mr Stone.* Mr Lincoln isn't home yet, I daresay ?

*Susan.* No, Mr Stone. He won't be long, with all the gentlemen coming.

*Mr Stone.* How would you like your master to be President of the United States, Susan ?

*Susan.* I'm sure he'd do it very nicely, sir.

*Mr Cuffney.* He would have to leave Springfield, Susan, and go to live in Washington.

*Susan.* I daresay we should take to Washington very well, sir.

*Mr Cuffney.* Ah ! I'm glad to hear that.

*Susan.* Mrs Lincoln's rather particular about the tobacco smoke.

*Mr Stone.* To be sure, yes, thank you, Susan.

*Susan.* The master doesn't smoke, you know.



And Mrs Lincoln's specially particular about this room. Abraham Lincoln

*Mr Cuffney.* Quite so. That's very considerate of you, Susan. [*They knock out their pipes.*]

*Susan.* Though some people might not hold with a gentleman not doing as he'd a mind in his own house, as you might say. [*She goes out.*]

*Mr Cuffney* (after a further pause, stroking his pipe). I suppose there's no doubt about the message they'll bring ?

*Mr Stone.* No, that's settled right enough. It'll be an invitation. That's as sure as John Brown's dead.

*Mr Cuffney.* I could never make Abraham out rightly about old John. One couldn't stomach slaving more than the other, yet Abraham didn't hold with the old chap standing up against it with the sword. Bad philosophy, or something, he called it. Talked about fanatics who do nothing but get themselves at a rope's end.

*Mr Stone.* Abraham's all for the constitution. He wants the constitution to be an honest master. There's nothing he wants like that, and he'll stand for that, firm as a Sampson of the spirit, if he goes to Washington. He'd give his life to persuade the state against slaving, but until it is persuaded and makes its laws against it, he'll have nothing

to do with violence in the name of laws that aren't made. That's why old John's raiding affair stuck in his gullet.

*Mr Cuffney.* He was a brave man, going like that, with a few zealous like himself, and a handful of niggers, to free thousands.

*Mr Stone.* He was. And those were brave words when they took him out to hang him. "I think, my friends, you are guilty of a great wrong against God and humanity. You may dispose of me very easily. I am nearly disposed of now. But this question is still to be settled—this negro question, I mean. The end of that is not yet." I was there that day. Stonewall Jackson was there. He turned away. There was a colonel there giving orders. When it was over, "So perish all foes of the human race" he called out. But only those that were afraid of losing their slaves believed it.

*Mr Cuffney (a pause).* It was a bad thing to hang a man like that. . . . There's a song that they've made about him. *[He sings quietly.]*

John Brown's body lies a mould'ring in the  
grave,  
But his soul goes marching on. . . .

*Mr Stone.* I know.

*The two together (singing quietly).*

Abraham  
Lincoln

The stars of heaven are looking kindly down  
On the grave of old John Brown. . . .

*[After a moment Mrs Lincoln comes in. The  
men rise.]*

*Mrs Lincoln.* Good evening, Mr Stone. Good evening, Mr Cuffney.

*Mr Stone and Mr Cuffney.* Good evening, ma'am.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Sit down, if you please.

*[They all sit.]*

*Mr Stone.* This is a great evening for you, ma'am.

*Mrs Lincoln.* It is.

*Mr Cuffney.* What time do you expect the deputation, ma'am ?

*Mrs Lincoln.* They should be here at seven o'clock. *(With an inquisitive nose.)* Surely Abraham hasn't been smoking.

*Mr Stone (rising).* Shall I open the window, ma'am ? It gets close of an evening.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Naturally, in March. You may leave the window, Samuel Stone. We do not smoke in the parlour.

*Mr Stone (resuming his seat).* By no means, ma'am.

*Mrs Lincoln.* I shall be obliged to you.

*Mr Cuffney.* Has Abraham decided what he will say to the invitation ?

*Mrs Lincoln.* He will accept it.

*Mr Stone.* A very right decision, if I may say so.

*Mrs Lincoln.* It is.

*Mr Cuffney.* And you, ma'am, have advised him that way, I'll be bound.

*Mrs Lincoln.* You said this was a great evening for me. It is, and I'll say more than I mostly do, because it is. I'm likely to go into history now with a great man. For I know better than any how great he is. I'm plain looking and I've a sharp tongue, and I've a mind that doesn't always go in his easy, high way. And that's what history will see, and it will laugh a little, and say, 'Poor Abraham Lincoln.' That's all right, but it's not all. I've always known when he should go forward, and when he should hold back. I've watched, and watched, and what I've learnt America will profit by. There are women like that, lots of them. But I'm lucky. My work's going farther than Illinois—it's going farther than any of us can tell. I made things easy for him to think and think when we were poor, and now his thinking has brought him to this. They wanted to make him Governor of Oregon, and he would have gone and have come to nothing there. I stopped him. Now they're

coming to ask him to be President, and I've told him to go. Abraham Lincoln

*Mr Stone.* If you please, ma'am, I should like to apologise for smoking in here.

*Mrs Lincoln.* That's no matter, Samuel Stone. Only, don't do it again.

*Mr Cuffney.* It's a great place for a man to fill. Do you know how Seward takes Abraham's nomination by the Republicans ?

*Mrs Lincoln.* Seward is ambitious. He expected the nomination. Abraham will know how to use him.

*Mr Stone.* The split among the Democrats makes the election of the Republican choice a certainty, I suppose ?

*Mrs Lincoln.* Abraham says so.

*Mr Cuffney.* You know, it's hard to believe. When I think of the times I've sat in this room of an evening, and seen your husband come in, ma'am, with his battered hat nigh falling off the back of his head, and stuffed with papers that won't go into his pockets, and god-darning some rascal who'd done him about an assignment or a trespass, I can't think he's going up there into the eyes of the world.

*Mrs Lincoln.* I've tried for years to make him buy a new hat.

*Mr Cuffney.* I have a very large selection just in from New York. Perhaps Abraham might allow me to offer him one for his departure.

*Mrs Lincoln.* He might. But he'll wear the old one.

*Mr Stone.* Slavery and the South. They're big things he'll have to deal with. "The end of that is not yet." That's what old John Brown said, "the end of that is not yet."

*[Abraham Lincoln comes in, a greenish and crumpled top hat leaving his forehead well uncovered, his wide pockets brimming over with documents. He is fifty, and he still preserves his clean-shaven state. He kisses his wife and shakes hands with his friends.]*

*Lincoln.* Well, Mary. How d'ye do, Samuel? How d'ye do, Timothy?

*Mr Stone and Mr Cuffney.* Good-evening, Abraham.

*Lincoln (while he takes off his hat and shakes out sundry papers from the lining into a drawer).* John Brown, did you say? Ay, John Brown. But that's not the way it's to be done. And you can't do the right thing the wrong way. That's as bad as the wrong thing, if you're going to keep the state together.

*Mr Cuffney.* Well, we'll be going. We only Abraham  
came in to give you good-faring, so to say, in the Lincoln  
great word you've got to speak this evening.

*Mr Stone.* It makes a humble body almost afraid of himself, Abraham, to know his friend is to be one of the great ones of the earth, with his yes and no law for these many, many thousands of folk.

*Lincoln.* It makes a man humble to be chosen so, Samuel. So humble that no man but would say "No" to such bidding if he dare. To be President of this people, and trouble gathering everywhere in men's hearts. That's a searching thing. Bitterness, and scorn, and wrestling often with men I shall despise, and perhaps nothing truly done at the end. But I must go. Yes. Thank you, Samuel, thank you, Timothy. Just a glass of that cordial, Mary, before they leave.

*[He goes to a cupboard.]*

May the devil smudge that girl!

*[Calling at the door.]*

Susan! Susan Deddington! Where's that darnation cordial?

*Mrs Lincoln.* It's all right, Abraham. I told the girl to keep it out. The cupboard's choked with papers.

*Susan (coming in with bottle and glasses).* I'm sure I'm sorry. I was told——



*Lincoln.* All right, all right, Susan. Get along with you.

*Susan.* Thank you, sir. [*She goes.*]

*Lincoln* (*pouring out drink*). Poor hospitality for whisky-drinking rascals like yourselves. But the thought's good.

*Mr Stone.* Don't mention it, Abraham.

*Mr Cuffney.* We wish you well, Abraham. Our compliments, ma'am. And God bless America. Samuel, I give you the United States, and Abraham Lincoln. [*Mr Cuffney and Mr Stone drink.*]

*Mrs Lincoln.* Thank you.

*Lincoln.* Samuel, Timothy—I drink to the hope of honest friends. Mary, to friendship. I'll need that always, for I've a queer, anxious heart. And, God bless America. [*He and Mrs Lincoln drink.*]

*Mr Stone.* Well, good-night, Abraham. Good-night, ma'am.

*Mr Cuffney.* Good-night, good-night.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Good-night, Mr Stone. Good-night, Mr Cuffney.

*Lincoln.* Good-night, Samuel. Good-night, Timothy. And thank you for coming.

[*Mr Stone and Mr Cuffney go out.*]

*Mrs Lincoln.* You'd better see them in here.

*Lincoln.* Good. Five minutes to seven. You're sure about it, Mary?



*Mrs Lincoln.* Yes. Aren't you ?

Abraham  
Lincoln

*Lincoln.* We mean to set bounds to slavery. The South will resist. They may try to break away from the Union. That cannot be allowed. If the Union is set aside America will crumble. The saving of it may mean blood.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Who is to shape it all if you don't ?

*Lincoln.* There's nobody. I know it.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Then go.

*Lincoln.* Go.

*Mrs Lincoln (after a moment).* This hat is a disgrace to you, Abraham. You pay no heed to what I say, and you think it doesn't matter. A man like you ought to think a little about gentility.

*Lincoln.* To be sure. I forget.

*Mrs Lincoln.* You don't. You just don't heed. Samuel Stone's been smoking in here.

*Lincoln.* He's a careless, poor fellow.

*Mrs Lincoln.* He is, and a fine example you set him. You don't care whether he makes my parlour smell poison or not.

*Lincoln.* Of course I do——

*Mrs Lincoln.* You don't. Your head is too stuffed with things to think about my ways. I've got neighbours if you haven't.

*Lincoln.* Well, now, your neighbours are mine, I suppose.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Then why won't you consider appearances a little ?

*Lincoln.* Certainly. I must.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Will you get a new hat ?

*Lincoln.* Yes, I must see about it.

*Mrs Lincoln.* When ?

*Lincoln.* In a day or two. Before long.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Abraham, I've got a better temper than anybody will ever guess.

*Lincoln.* You have, my dear. And you need it, I confess. *[Susan comes in.]*

*Susan.* The gentlemen have come.

*Mrs Lincoln.* I'll come to them.

*Susan.* Does the master want a handkerchief, ma'am ? He didn't take one this morning.

*Lincoln.* It's no matter now, Susan.

*Susan.* If you please, I've brought you one, sir.

*[She gives it to him, and goes.]*

*Mrs Lincoln.* I'll send them in. Abraham, I believe in you.

*Lincoln.* I know, I know.

*[Mrs Lincoln goes out. Lincoln moves to a map of the United States that is hanging on the wall, and stands silently looking at it. After a few moments Susan comes to the door.]*

*Susan.* This way, please.

[*She shows in William Tucker, a florid, prosperous merchant ; Henry Hind, an alert little attorney ; Elias Price, a lean lay-preacher ; and James Macintosh, the editor of a Republican journal. Susan goes.*

Abraham  
Lincoln

*Tucker.* Mr Lincoln. Tucker my name is—  
William Tucker. [*He presents his companions.*

Mr Henry Hind—follows your profession, Mr Lincoln. Leader of the bar in Ohio. Mr Elias Price, of Pennsylvania. You've heard him preach, maybe. James Macintosh you know. I come from Chicago.

*Lincoln.* Gentlemen, at your service. How d'ye do, James ? Will you be seated ?

[*They sit round the table.*

*Tucker.* I have the honour to be chairman of this delegation. We are sent from Chicago by the Republican Convention, to enquire whether you will accept their invitation to become the Republican candidate for the office of President of the United States.

*Price.* The Convention is aware, Mr Lincoln, that under the circumstances, seeing that the Democrats have split, this is more than an invitation to candidature. Their nominee is almost certain to be elected.

*Lincoln.* Gentlemen, I am known to one of you only. Do you know my many disqualifications for this work ?

*Hind.* It's only fair to say that they have been discussed freely.

*Lincoln.* There are some, shall we say graces, that I lack. Washington does not altogether neglect these.

*Tucker.* They have been spoken of. But these are days, Mr Lincoln, if I may say so, too difficult, too dangerous, for these to weigh at the expense of other qualities that you were considered to possess.

*Lincoln.* Seward and Hook have both had great experience.

*Macintosh.* Hook had no strong support. For Seward, there are doubts as to his discretion.

*Lincoln.* Do not be under any misunderstanding, I beg you. I aim at moderation so far as it is honest. But I am a very stubborn man, gentlemen. If the South insists upon the extension of slavery, and claims the right to secede, as you know it very well may do, and the decision lies with me, it will mean resistance, inexorable, with blood if needs be. I would have everybody's mind clear as to that.

*Price.* It will be for you to decide, and we believe you to be an upright man, Mr Lincoln.

*Lincoln.* Seward and Hook would be difficult to carry as subordinates. Abraham Lincoln

*Tucker.* But they will have to be carried so, and there's none likelier for the job than you.

*Lincoln.* Will your Republican Press stand by me for a principle, James, whatever comes ?

*Macintosh.* There's no other man we would follow so readily.

*Lincoln.* If you send me, the South will have little but derision for your choice.

*Hind.* We believe that you'll last out their laughter.

*Lincoln.* I can take any man's ridicule—I'm trained to it by a . . . somewhat odd figure that it pleased God to give me, if I may so far be pleasant with you. But this slavery business will be long, and deep, and bitter. I know it. If you do me this honour, gentlemen, you must look to me for no compromise in this matter. If abolition comes in due time by constitutional means, good. I want it. But, while we will not force abolition, we will give slavery no approval, and we will not allow it to extend its boundaries by one yard. The determination is in my blood. When I was a boy I made a trip to New Orleans, and there I saw them, chained, beaten, kicked as a man would be ashamed to kick a thieving dog. And I saw a young girl

driven up and down the room that the bidders might satisfy themselves. And I said then, "If ever I get a chance to hit that thing, I'll hit it hard."

[*A pause.*]

You have no conditions to make ?

*Tucker.* None.

*Lincoln (rising).* Mrs Lincoln and I would wish you to take supper with us.

*Tucker.* That's very kind, I'm sure. And your answer, Mr Lincoln ?

*Lincoln.* When you came, you did not know me, Mr Tucker. You may have something to say now not for my ears.

*Tucker.* Nothing in the world, I assure——

*Lincoln.* I will prepare Mrs Lincoln. You will excuse me for no more than a minute.

[*He goes out.*]

*Tucker.* Well, we might have chosen a handsomer article, but I doubt whether we could have chosen a better.

*Hind.* He would make a great judge—if you weren't prosecuting.

*Price.* I'd tell most people, but I'd ask that man.

*Tucker.* He hasn't given us yes or no yet. Why should he leave us like that, as though plain wasn't plain ?

*Hind.* Perhaps he wanted a thought by himself first. Abraham Lincoln

*Macintosh.* It wasn't that. But he was right. Abraham Lincoln sees deeper into men's hearts than most. He knows this day will be a memory to us all our lives. Under his eye, which of you could have given play to any untoward thought that had started in you against him since you came into this room? But, leaving you, he knew you could test yourselves to your own ease, and speak the more confident for it, and, if you found yourselves clean of doubt, carry it all the happier in your minds after. Is there a doubt among us?

*Tucker.* }  
*Hind.* } No, none.  
*Price.* }

*Macintosh.* Then, Mr Tucker, ask him again when he comes back.

*Tucker.* I will.

*[They sit in silence for a moment, and Lincoln comes in again, back to his place at the table.]*

*Lincoln.* I wouldn't have you think it graceless of me to be slow in my answer. But once given, it's for the deep good or the deep ill of all this country. In the face of that a man may well ask himself twenty times, when he's twenty times

sure. You make no qualification, any one among you ?

*Tucker.* None. The invitation is as I put it when we sat down. And I would add that we are, all of us, proud to bear it to a man as whom we feel there is none so fitted to receive it.

*Lincoln.* I thank you. I accept.

*[He rises, the others with him. He goes to the door and calls.]*

*Susan.* *[There is silence. Susan comes in.]*

*Susan.* Yes, Mr Lincoln.

*Lincoln.* Take these gentlemen to Mrs Lincoln. I will follow at once.

*[The four men go with Susan. Lincoln stands silently for a moment. He goes again to the map and looks at it. He then turns to the table again, and kneels beside it, possessed and deliberate, burying his face in his hands.]*

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS

*The two Chroniclers.* Lonely is the man who understands.

Lonely is vision that leads a man away



From the pasture-lands,  
From the furrows of corn and the brown loads of hay,  
To the mountain-side,  
To the high places where contemplation brings  
All his adventurings  
Among the sowers and the tillers in the wide  
Valleys to one fused experience,  
That shall control  
The courses of his soul,  
And give his hand  
Courage and continence.

Abraham  
Lincoln

*The First Chronicler.* Shall a man understand,  
He shall know bitterness because his kind,  
Being perplexed of mind,  
Hold issues even that are nothing mated.  
And he shall give  
Counsel out of his wisdom that none shall hear ;  
And steadfast in vain persuasion must he live,  
And unabated  
Shall his temptation be.

*Second Chronicler.* Coveting the little, the instant  
gain,  
The brief security,  
And easy-tongued renown,

Many will mock the vision that his brain  
Builds to a far, unmeasured monument,  
And many bid his resolutions down  
To the wages of content.

*First Chronicler.* A year goes by.

*The two together.* Here contemplate  
A heart, undaunted to possess  
Itself among the glooms of fate,  
In vision and in loneliness.

## SCENE II

*A year later. Seward's room at Washington. William Seward, Secretary of State, is seated at his table with Johnson White and Caleb Jennings, representing the Commissioners of the Confederate States.*

*White.* It's the common feeling in the South, Mr Seward, that you're the one man at Washington to see this thing with large imagination. I say this with no disrespect to the President.

*Seward.* I appreciate your kindness, Mr White. But the Union is the Union—you can't get over  
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that. We are faced with a plain fact. Six of the southern states have already declared for secession. The President feels, and I may say that I and my colleagues are with him, that to break up the country like that means the decline of America.

Abraham  
Lincoln

*Jennings.* But everything might be done by compromise, Mr Seward. Withdraw your garrison from Fort Sumter, Beauregard will be instructed to take no further action, South Carolina will be satisfied with the recognition of her authority, and, as likely as not, be willing to give the lead to the other states in reconsidering secession.

*Seward.* It is certainly a very attractive and, I conceive, a humane proposal.

*White.* By furthering it you might be the saviour of the country from civil war, Mr Seward.

*Seward.* The President dwelt on his resolution to hold Fort Sumter in his inaugural address. It will be difficult to persuade him to go back on that. He's firm in his decisions.

*White.* There are people who would call him stubborn. Surely if it were put to him tactfully that so simple a course might avert incalculable disaster, no man would nurse his dignity to the point of not yielding. I speak plainly, but it's a time for plain speaking. Mr Lincoln is doubtless a man of remarkable qualities : on the two occasions

when I have spoken to him I have not been unimpressed. That is so, Mr Jennings ?

*Jennings.* Certainly.

*White.* But what does his experience of great affairs of state amount to beside yours, Mr Seward ? He must know how much he depends on certain members of his Cabinet, I might say upon a certain member, for advice.

*Seward.* We have to move warily.

*Jennings.* Naturally. A man is sensitive, doubtless, in his first taste of office.

*Seward.* My support of the President is, of course, unquestionable.

*White.* Oh, entirely. But how can your support be more valuable than in lending him your unequalled understanding ?

*Seward.* The whole thing is coloured in his mind by the question of slavery.

*Jennings.* Disabuse his mind. Slavery is nothing. Persuade him to withdraw from Fort Sumter, and slavery can be settled round a table. You know there's a considerable support even for abolition in the South itself. If the trade has to be allowed in some districts, what is that compared to the disaster of civil war ?

*White.* We do not believe that the Southern States wish with any enthusiasm to secede. They

merely wish to establish their right to do so. Abraham  
Acknowledge that by evacuating Fort Sumter, and Lincoln  
nothing will come of it but a perfectly proper concession to an independence of spirit that is not disloyal to the Union at heart.

*Seward.* You understand, of course, that I can say nothing officially.

*Jennings.* These are nothing but informal suggestions.

*Seward.* But I may tell you that I am not unsympathetic.

*White.* We were sure that that would be so.

*Seward.* And my word is not without influence.

*Jennings.* It can be used to bring you very great credit, Mr Seward.

*Seward.* In the meantime, you will say nothing of this interview, beyond making your reports, which should be confidential.

*White.* You may rely upon us.

*Seward* (*rising with the others*). Then I will bid you good-morning.

*White.* We are profoundly sensible of the magnanimous temper in which we are convinced you will conduct this grave business. Good-morning, Mr Seward.

*Jennings.* And I——

[*There is a knock at the door.*

*Seward.* Yes—come in. [*A Clerk comes in.*

*Clerk.* The President is coming up the stairs, sir.

*Seward.* Thank you. [*The Clerk goes.*

This is unfortunate. Say nothing, and go at once.

[*Lincoln comes in, now whiskered and bearded.*

*Lincoln.* Good-morning, Mr Seward. Good-morning, gentlemen.

*Seward.* Good-morning, Mr President. And I am obliged to you for calling, gentlemen. Good-morning. [*He moves towards the door.*

*Lincoln.* Perhaps these gentlemen could spare me ten minutes.

*White.* It might not——

*Lincoln.* Say five minutes.

*Fennings.* Perhaps you would——

*Lincoln.* I am anxious always for any opportunity to exchange views with our friends of the South. Much enlightenment may be gained in five minutes. Be seated, I beg you—if Mr Seward will allow us.

*Seward.* By all means. Shall I leave you ?

*Lincoln.* Leave us—but why ? I may want your support, Mr Secretary, if we should not wholly agree. Be seated, gentlemen.

[*Seward places a chair for Lincoln, and they sit at the table.*

*Lincoln.* You have messages for us ?

*White.* Well, no, we can't say that.

*Lincoln.* No messages ? Perhaps I am in-  
quisitive ?

Abraham  
Lincoln

*Seward.* These gentlemen are anxious to sound any moderating influences.

*Lincoln.* I trust they bring moderating influences with them. You will find me a ready listener, gentlemen.

*Jennings.* It's a delicate matter, Mr Lincoln. Ours is just an informal visit.

*Lincoln.* Quite, quite. But we shall lose nothing by knowing each other's minds.

*White.* Shall we tell the President what we came to say, Mr Seward ?

*Lincoln.* I shall be grateful. If I should fail to understand, Mr Seward, no doubt, will enlighten me.

*Jennings.* We thought it hardly worth while to trouble you at so early a stage.

*Lincoln.* So early a stage of what ?

*Jennings.* I mean——

*Seward.* These gentlemen, in a common anxiety for peace, were merely seeking the best channel through which suggestions could be made.

*Lincoln.* To whom ?

*Seward.* To the government.

*Lincoln.* The head of the government is here.

*White.* But——

*Lincoln.* Come, gentlemen. What is it ?

*Jennings.* It's this matter of Fort Sumter, Mr President. If you withdraw your garrison from Fort Sumter, it won't be looked upon as weakness in you. It will merely be looked upon as a concession to a natural privilege. We believe that the South at heart does not want secession. It wants to establish the right to decide for itself.

*Lincoln.* The South wants the stamp of national approval upon slavery. It can't have it.

*White.* Surely that's not the point. There's no law in the South against slavery.

*Lincoln.* Laws come from opinion, Mr White. The South knows it.

*Jennings.* Mr President, if I may say so, you don't quite understand.

*Lincoln.* Does Mr Seward understand ?

*White.* We believe so.

*Lincoln.* You are wrong. He doesn't understand, because you didn't mean him to. I don't blame you. You think you are acting for the best. You think you've got an honest case. But I'll put your case for you, and I'll put it naked. Many people in this country want abolition ; many don't. I'll say nothing for the moment as to the rights and wrongs of it. But every man, whether he



wants it or not, knows it may come. Why does the South propose secession ? Because it knows abolition may come, and it wants to avoid it. It wants more : it wants the right to extend the slave foundation. We've all been to blame for slavery, but we in the North have been willing to mend our ways. You have not. So you'll secede, and make your own laws. But you weren't prepared for resistance ; you don't want resistance. And you hope that if you can tide over the first crisis and make us give way, opinion will prevent us from opposing you with force again, and you'll be able to get your own way about the slave business by threats. That's your case. You didn't say so to Mr Seward, but it is. Now, I'll give you my answer. Gentlemen, it's no good hiding this thing in a corner. It's got to be settled. I said the other day that Fort Sumter would be held as long as we could hold it. I said it because I know exactly what it means. Why are you investing it ? Say, if you like, it's to establish your right of secession with no purpose of exercising it. Why do you want to establish that right ? Because now we will allow no extension of slavery, and because some day we may abolish it. You can't deny it ; there's no other answer.

Abraham  
Lincoln

*Jennings.* I see how it is. You may force freedom

as much as you like, but we are to beware how we force slavery.

*Lincoln.* It couldn't be put better, Mr Jennings. That's what the Union means. It is a Union that stands for common right. That is its foundation—that is why it is for every honest man to preserve it. Be clear about this issue. If there is war, it will not be on the slave question. If the South is loyal to the Union, it can fight slave legislation by constitutional means, and win its way if it can. If it claims the right to secede, then to preserve this country from disruption, to maintain that right to which every state pledged itself when the Union was won for us by our fathers, war may be the only way. We won't break up the Union, and you shan't. In your hands, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. You can have no conflict without yourselves being the aggressors. I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, do not allow it to break our bonds of affection. That is our answer. Tell them that. Will you tell them that ?

*White.* You are determined ?

*Lincoln.* I beg you to tell them.

*Jennings.* It shall be as you wish.

*Lincoln.* Implore them to order Beauregard's return. You can telegraph it now, from here. *Abraham Lincoln*  
Will you do that ?

*White.* If you wish it.

*Lincoln.* Earnestly. Mr Seward, will you please place a clerk at their service. Ask for an answer.

*[Seward rings a bell. A Clerk comes in.]*

*Seward.* Give these gentlemen a private wire. Place yourself at their disposal.

*Clerk.* Yes, sir.

*[White and Jennings go out with the Clerk.]*

*For a moment Lincoln and Seward are silent, Lincoln pacing the room, Seward standing at the table.*

*Lincoln.* Seward, this won't do.

*Seward.* You don't suspect——

*Lincoln.* I do not. But let us be plain. No man can say how wisely, but providence has brought me to the leadership of this country, with a task before me greater than that which rested on Washington himself. When I made my Cabinet, you were the first man I chose. I do not regret it ; I think I never shall. But remember, faith earns faith. What is it ? Why didn't those men come to see me ?

*Seward.* They thought my word might bear more weight with you than theirs.

*Lincoln.* Your word for what ?

*Seward.* Discretion about Fort Sumter.

*Lincoln.* Discretion ?

*Seward.* It's devastating, this thought of war.

*Lincoln.* It is. Do you think I'm less sensible of that than you ? War should be impossible. But you can only make it impossible by destroying its causes. Don't you see that to withdraw from Fort Sumter is to do nothing of the kind ? If one half of this country claims the right to disown the Union, the claim in the eyes of every true guardian among us must be a cause for war, unless we hold the Union to be a false thing instead of the public consent to decent principles of life that it is. If we withdraw from Fort Sumter, we do nothing to destroy that cause. We can only destroy it by convincing them that secession is a betrayal of their trust. Please God we may do so.

*Seward.* Has there, perhaps, been some timidity in making all this clear to the country ?

*Lincoln.* Timidity ? And you were talking of discretion.

*Seward.* I mean that perhaps our policy has not been sufficiently defined.

*Lincoln.* And have you not concurred in all our decisions ? Do not deceive yourself. You urge me to discretion in one breath and tax me with timidity

in the next. While there was hope that they might call Beauregard back out of their own good sense, I was determined to say nothing to inflame them. Do you call that timidity? Now their intention is clear, and you've heard me speak this morning clearly also. And now you talk about discretion—you, who call what was discretion at the right time, timidity, now counsel timidity at the wrong time, and call it discretion. Seward, you may think I'm simple, but I can see your mind working as plainly as you might see the innards of a clock. You can bring great gifts to this government, with your zeal, and your administrative experience, and your love of men. Don't spoil it by thinking I've got a dull brain.

Abraham  
Lincoln

*Seward (slowly).* Yes, I see. I've not been thinking quite clearly about it all.

*Lincoln (taking a paper from his pocket).* Here's the paper you sent me: "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration. Great Britain . . . Russia . . . Mexico . . . policy. Either the President must control this himself, or devolve it on some member of his Cabinet. It is not my especial province. But I neither seek to evade nor assume responsibility."

*[There is a pause, the two men looking at each other without speaking. Lincoln hands*

*the paper to Seward, who holds it for a moment, tears it up, and throws it into his basket.*

*Seward.* I beg your pardon.

*Lincoln (taking his hand).* That's brave of you.

*[Mr Slaney, a Secretary, comes in.]*

*Slaney.* There's a messenger from Major Anderson, sir. He's ridden straight from Fort Sumter.

*Lincoln.* Take him to my room. No, bring him here. *[Slaney goes.]*

*Seward.* What does it mean?

*Lincoln.* I don't like the sound of it.

*[He rings a bell. A Clerk comes in.]*

Are there any gentlemen of the Cabinet in the house?

*Clerk.* Mr Chase and Mr Blair, I believe, sir.

*Lincoln.* My compliments to them, and will they be prepared to see me here at once if necessary. Send the same message to any other ministers you can find.

*Clerk.* Yes, sir.

*[He goes.]*

*Lincoln.* We may have to decide now—now.

*[Slaney shows in a perspiring and dust-covered Messenger, and retires.]*

*Lincoln.* From Major Anderson?

*The Messenger.* Yes, sir. Word of mouth, sir.

*Lincoln.* Your credentials?

Abraham  
Lincoln

*The Messenger.* Major Anderson presents his duty to the government. He can hold the Fort three days more without provisions and reinforcements.

[Lincoln rings the bell, and waits until a  
third Clerk comes in.

*Lincoln.* See if Mr White and Mr Jennings have had any answer yet. Mr——what's his name?

*Seward, Hawkins.*

*Lincoln.* Mr Hawkins is attending to them. And ask Mr Slaney to come here.

*Clerk.* Yes, sir.

[He goes. Lincoln sits at the table and writes. Slaney comes in.

*Lincoln (writing).* Mr Slaney, do you know where General Scott is ?

*Slaney.* At headquarters, I think, sir.

*Lincoln.* Take this to him yourself and bring an answer back.

*Slaney.* Yes, sir.

[He takes the note, and goes.

*Lincoln.* Are things very bad at the Fort ?

*The Messenger.* The Major says three days, sir. Most of us would have said twenty-four hours.

[A knock at the door.



*Seward.* Yes. *[Hawkins comes in.]*

*Hawkins.* Mr White is just receiving a message across the wire, sir.

*Lincoln.* Ask him to come here directly he's finished.

*Hawkins.* Yes, sir.

*[He goes. Lincoln goes to a far door and opens it. He speaks to the Messenger.]*

*Lincoln.* Will you wait in here ?

*[The Messenger goes through.]*

*Seward.* Do you mind if I smoke ?

*Lincoln.* Not at all, not at all.

*[Seward lights a cigar.]*

Three days. If White's message doesn't help us—three days.

*Seward.* But surely we must withdraw as a matter of military necessity now.

*Lincoln.* Why doesn't White come ?

*[Seward goes to the window and throws it up.]*

*He stands looking down into the street.*

*Lincoln stands at the table looking fixedly at the door. After a moment or two there is a knock.*

*Lincoln.* Come in.

*[Hawkins shows in White and Jennings, and goes out. Seward closes the window.]*

*Lincoln.* Well ?



*White.* I'm sorry. They won't give way.

Abraham  
Lincoln

*Lincoln.* You told them all I said ?

*Jennings.* Everything.

*Lincoln.* It's critical.

*White.* They are definite.

*[Lincoln paces once or twice up and down the room, standing again at his place at the table.]*

*Lincoln.* They leave no opening ?

*White.* I regret to say, none.

*Lincoln.* It's a grave decision. Terribly grave.

Thank you, gentlemen. Good-morning.

*White and Jennings.* Good-morning, gentlemen.

*[They go out.]*

*Lincoln.* My God. Seward, we need great courage, great faith.

*[He rings the bell. The Second Clerk comes in.]*

*Lincoln.* Did you take my messages ?

*The Clerk.* Yes, sir. Mr Chase and Mr Blair are here. The other ministers are coming immediately.

*Lincoln.* Ask them to come here at once. And send Mr Slaney in directly he returns.

*The Clerk.* Yes, sir. *[He goes.]*

*Lincoln (after a pause).* "There is a tide in the affairs of men . . ." Do you read Shakespeare, Seward ?

*Seward.* Shakespeare ? No.

*Lincoln.* Ah !

*[Salmon Chase, Secretary of the Treasury,  
and Montgomery Blair, Postmaster-  
General, come in.]*

*Lincoln.* Good-morning, Mr Chase, Mr Blair.

*Seward.* Good-morning, gentlemen.

*Blair.* Good-morning, Mr President. How d'ye do, Mr Seward ?

*Chase.* Good-morning, Mr President. Something urgent ?

*Lincoln.* Let us be seated.

*[As they draw chairs up to the table, the other members of the Cabinet, Simon Cameron, Caleb Smith, Burnet Hook, and Gideon Welles, come in. There is an exchange of greetings, while they arrange themselves round the table.]*

*Lincoln.* Gentlemen, we meet in a crisis, the most fateful, perhaps, that has ever faced any government in this country. It can be stated briefly. A message has just come from Anderson. He can hold Fort Sumter three days at most unless we send men and provisions.

*Cameron.* How many men ?

*Lincoln.* I shall know from Scott in a few minutes how many are necessary.

*Welles.* Suppose we haven't as many.

Abraham  
Lincoln

*Lincoln.* Then it's a question of provisioning. We may not be able to do enough to be effective. The question is whether we shall do as much as we can.

*Hook.* If we withdrew altogether, wouldn't it give the South a lead towards compromise, as being an acknowledgment of their authority, while leaving us free to plead military necessity if we found public opinion dangerous ?

*Lincoln.* My mind is clear. To do less than we can do, whatever that may be, will be fundamentally to allow the South's claim to right of secession. That is my opinion. If you evade the question now, you will have to answer it to-morrow.

*Blair.* I agree with the President.

*Hook.* We ought to defer action as long as possible. I consider that we should withdraw.

*Lincoln.* Don't you see that to withdraw may postpone war, but that it will make it inevitable in the end ?

*Smith.* It is inevitable if we resist.

*Lincoln.* I fear it will be so. But in that case we shall enter it with uncompromised principles. Mr Chase ?

*Chase.* It is difficult. But, on the whole, my opinion is with yours, Mr President.

*Lincoln.* And you, Seward ?

*Seward.* I respect your opinion, but I must differ.

*[A knock at the door.]*

*Lincoln.* Come in.

*[Slaney comes in. He gives a letter to*

*Lincoln and goes.]*

*Lincoln (reading).* Scott says twenty thousand men.

*Seward.* We haven't ten thousand ready.

*Lincoln.* It remains a question of sending provisions. I charge you, all of you, to weigh this thing with all your understanding. To temporise now cannot, in my opinion, avert war. To speak plainly to the world in standing by our resolution to hold Fort Sumter with all our means, and in a plain declaration that the Union must be preserved, will leave us with a clean cause, simply and loyally supported. I tremble at the thought of war. But we have in our hands a sacred trust. It is threatened. We have had no thought of aggression. We have been the aggressed. Persuasion has failed, and I conceive it to be our duty to resist. To withhold supplies from Anderson would be to deny that duty. Gentlemen, the matter is before you.

*[A pause.]*

For provisioning the fort ?

*[Lincoln, Chase, and Blair hold up their hands.]*

Lincoln. For immediate withdrawal ?

Abraham  
Lincoln

[*Seward, Cameron, Smith, Hook, and Welles hold up their hands. There is a pause of some moments.*]

Lincoln. Gentlemen, I may have to take upon myself the responsibility of over-riding your vote. It will be for me to satisfy Congress and public opinion. Should I receive any resignations ?

[*There is silence.*]

Lincoln. I thank you for your consideration, gentlemen. That is all.

[*They rise, and the Ministers, with the exception of Seward, go out, talking as they pass beyond the door.*]

Lincoln. You are wrong, Seward, wrong.

Seward. I believe you. I respect your judgment even as far as that. But I must speak as I feel.

Lincoln. May I speak to this man alone ?

Seward. Certainly.

[*He goes out. Lincoln stands motionless for a moment. Then he moves to a map of the United States, much larger than the one in his Illinois home, and looks at it as he did there. He goes to the far door and opens it.*]

Lincoln. Will you come in ?

[*The Messenger comes.*]

*Lincoln.* Can you ride back to Major Anderson at once ?

*The Messenger.* Yes, sir.

*Lincoln.* Tell him that we cannot reinforce him immediately. We haven't the men.

*The Messenger.* Yes, sir.

*Lincoln.* And say that the first convoy of supplies will leave Washington this evening.

*The Messenger.* Yes, sir.

*Lincoln.* Thank you.

[*The Messenger goes. Lincoln stands at the table for a moment ; he rings the bell. Hawkins comes in.*

*Lincoln.* Mr Slaney, please.

*Hawkins.* Yes, sir.

[*He goes, and a moment later Slaney comes in.*

*Lincoln.* Go to General Scott. Ask him to come to me at once.

*Slaney.* Yes, sir.

[*He goes.*

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS

*The two Chroniclers.* You who have gone gathering  
Cornflowers and meadowsweet,  
Heard the hazels glancing down  
On September eves,

Seen the homeward rooks on wing  
Over fields of golden wheat,  
And the silver cups that crown  
Water-lily leaves ;

Abraham  
Lincoln

You who know the tenderness  
Of old men at eve-tide,  
Coming from the hedgerows,  
Coming from the plough,  
And the wandering caress  
Of winds upon the woodside,  
When the crying yaffle goes  
Underneath the bough ;

*First Chronicler.* You who mark the flowing  
Of sap upon the May-time,  
And the waters welling  
From the watershed,  
You who count the growing  
Of harvest and hay-time,  
Knowing these the telling  
Of your daily bread ;

*Second Chronicler.* You who cherish courtesy  
With your fellows at your gate,  
And about your hearthstone sit  
Under love's decrees,

You who know that death will be  
Speaking with you soon or late,  
*The two together.* Kinsmen, what is mother-wit  
But the light of these ?

Knowing these, what is there more  
For learning in your little years ?  
Are not these all gospels bright  
Shining on your day ?  
How then shall your hearts be sore  
With envy and her brood of fears,  
How forget the words of light  
From the mountain-way . . .

Blessed are the merciful. . . .  
Does not every threshold seek  
Meadows and the flight of birds  
For compassion still ?  
Blessed are the merciful. . . .  
Are we pilgrims yet to speak  
Out of Olivet the words  
Of knowledge and good-will ?

*First Chronicler.* Two years of darkness, and this  
man but grows  
Greater in resolution, more constant in compassion.  
He goes  
The way of dominion in pitiful, high-hearted fashion.



### SCENE III

Abraham  
Lincoln

*Nearly two years later.*

*A small reception room at the White House. Mrs Lincoln, dressed in a fashion perhaps a little too considered, despairing as she now does of any sartorial grace in her husband, and acutely conscious that she must meet this necessity of office alone, is writing. She rings the bell, and Susan, who has taken her promotion more philosophically, comes in.*

*Mrs Lincoln.* Admit anyone who calls, Susan. And enquire whether the President will be in to tea.

*Susan.* Mr Lincoln has just sent word that he will be in.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Very well. [Susan is going.  
*Susan.*

*Susan.* Yes, ma'am.

*Mrs Lincoln.* You still say Mr Lincoln. You should say the President.

*Susan.* Yes, ma'am. But you see, ma'am, it's difficult after calling him Mr Lincoln for fifteen years.

*Mrs Lincoln.* But you must remember. Everybody calls him the President now.

*Susan.* No, ma'am. There's a good many people

call him Father Abraham now. And there's some that like him even better than that. Only to-day Mr Coldpenny, at the stores, said, "Well, Susan, and how's old Abe this morning?"

*Mrs Lincoln.* I hope you don't encourage them.

*Susan.* Oh, no, ma'am. I always refer to him as Mr Lincoln.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Yes, but you must say the President.

*Susan.* I'm afraid I shan't ever learn, ma'am.

*Mrs Lincoln.* You must try.

*Susan.* Yes, of course, ma'am.

*Mrs Lincoln.* And bring any visitors up.

*Susan.* Yes, ma'am. There's a lady waiting now.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Then why didn't you say so?

*Susan.* That's what I was going to, ma'am, when you began to talk about Mr—I mean the President, ma'am.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Well, show her up.

[*Susan goes. Mrs Lincoln closes her writing desk. Susan returns, showing in Mrs Goliath Blow.*]

*Susan.* Mrs Goliath Blow. [She goes.

*Mrs Blow.* Good-afternoon, Mrs Lincoln.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Good-afternoon, Mrs Blow. Sit down, please. [They sit.

*Mrs Blow.* And is the dear President well?

*Mrs Lincoln.* Yes. He's rather tired.

*Mrs Blow.* Of course, to be sure. This dreadful Abraham war. But I hope he's not getting tired of the Lincoln war.

*Mrs Lincoln.* It's a constant anxiety for him. He feels his responsibility very deeply.

*Mrs Blow.* To be sure. But you mustn't let him get war-weary. These monsters in the South have got to be stamped out.

*Mrs Lincoln.* I don't think you need be afraid of the President's firmness.

*Mrs Blow.* Oh, of course not. I was only saying to Goliath yesterday, "The President will never give way till he has the South squealing," and Goliath agreed. [Susan comes in.

*Susan.* Mrs Otherly, ma'am.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Show Mrs Otherly in. [Susan goes.

*Mrs Blow.* Oh, that dreadful woman. I believe she wants the war to stop.

*Susan (at the door).* Mrs Otherly.

[Mrs Otherly comes in and Susan goes.

*Mrs Lincoln.* Good-afternoon, Mrs Otherly. You know Mrs Goliath Blow?

*Mrs Otherly.* Yes. Good-afternoon. [She sits.

*Mrs Blow.* Goliath says the war will go on for another three years at least.

*Mrs Otherly.* Three years? That would be terrible, wouldn't it?

*Mrs Blow.* We must be prepared to make sacrifices.

*Mrs Otherly.* Yes.

*Mrs Blow.* It makes my blood boil to think of those people.

*Mrs Otherly.* I used to know a lot of them. Some of them were very kind and nice.

*Mrs Blow.* That was just their cunning, depend on it. I'm afraid there's a good deal of disloyalty among us. Shall we see the dear President this afternoon, Mrs Lincoln ?

*Mrs Lincoln.* He will be here directly, I think.

*Mrs Blow.* You're looking wonderfully well, with all the hard work that you have to do. I've really had to drop some of mine. And with expenses going up, it's all very lowering, don't you think ? Goliath and I have had to reduce several of our subscriptions. But, of course, we all have to deny ourselves something. Ah, good-afternoon, dear Mr President.

*[Lincoln comes in. The Ladies rise and shake hands with him.]*

*Lincoln.* Good-afternoon, ladies.

*Mrs Otherly.* Good-afternoon, Mr President.

*[They all sit.]*

*Mrs Blow.* And is there any startling news, Mr President ?

*Lincoln.* Madam, every morning when I wake up, and say to myself, a hundred, or two hundred, or a thousand of my countrymen will be killed to-day, I find it startling. Abraham Lincoln

*Mrs Blow.* Oh, yes, of course, to be sure. But I mean, is there any good news?

*Lincoln.* Yes. There is news of a victory. They lost twenty-seven hundred men—we lost eight hundred.

*Mrs Blow.* How splendid.

*Lincoln.* Thirty-five hundred.

*Mrs Blow.* Oh, but you mustn't talk like that, Mr President. There were only eight hundred that mattered.

*Lincoln.* The world is larger than your heart, madam.

*Mrs Blow.* Now the dear President is becoming whimsical, Mrs Lincoln.

*[Susan brings in tea-tray, and hands tea round. Lincoln takes none. Susan goes.]*

*Mrs Otherly.* Mr President.

*Lincoln.* Yes, ma'am.

*Mrs Otherly.* I don't like to impose upon your hospitality. I know how difficult everything is for you. But one has to take one's opportunities. May I ask you a question?

*Lincoln.* Certainly, ma'am.

*Mrs Otherly.* Isn't it possible for you to stop this war? In the name of a suffering country, I ask you that.

*Mrs Blow.* I'm sure such a question would never have entered my head.

*Lincoln.* It is a perfectly right question. Ma'am, I have but one thought always—how can this thing be stopped? But we must ensure the integrity of the Union. In two years war has become an hourly bitterness to me. I believe I suffer no less than any man. But it must be endured. The cause was a right one two years ago. It is unchanged.

*Mrs Otherly.* I know you are noble and generous. But I believe that war must be wrong under any circumstances, for any cause.

*Mrs Blow.* I'm afraid the President would have but little encouragement if he listened often to this kind of talk.

*Lincoln.* I beg you not to harass yourself, madam. Ma'am, I too believe war to be wrong. It is the weakness and the jealousy and the folly of men that make a thing so wrong possible. But we are all weak, and jealous, and foolish. That's how the world is, ma'am, and we cannot outstrip the world. Some of the worst of us are sullen, aggressive still—just clumsy, greedy pirates. Some of us have grown

out of that. But the best of us have an instinct to resist aggression if it won't listen to persuasion. You may say it's a wrong instinct. I don't know. But it's there, and it's there in millions of good men. I don't believe it's a wrong instinct. I believe that the world must come to wisdom slowly. It is for us who hate aggression to persuade men always and earnestly against it, and hope that, little by little, they will hear us. But in the meantime there will come moments when the aggressors will force the instinct to resistance to act. Then we must act earnestly, praying always in our courage that never again will this thing happen. And then we must turn again, and again, and again to persuasion. This appeal to force is the misdeed of an imperfect world. But we are imperfect. We must strive to purify the world, but we must not think ourselves pure above the world. When I had this thing to decide, it would have been easy to say, "No, I will have none of it; it is evil, and I will not touch it." But that would have decided nothing, and I saw what I believed to be the truth as I now put it to you, ma'am. It's a forlorn thing for any man to have this responsibility in his heart. I may see wrongly, but that's how I see.

*Mrs Blow.* I quite agree with you, Mr President. These brutes in the South must be taught, though I

Abraham  
Lincoln



doubt whether you can teach them anything except by destroying them. That's what Goliath says.

*Lincoln.* Goliath must be getting quite an old man.

*Mrs Blow.* Indeed, he's not, Mr President. Goliath is only thirty-eight.

*Lincoln.* Really, now? Perhaps I might be able to get him a commission.

*Mrs Blow.* Oh, no. Goliath couldn't be spared. He's doing contracts for the government, you know. Goliath couldn't possibly go. I'm sure he will be very pleased when I tell him what you say about these people who want to stop the war, Mr President. I hope Mrs Otherly is satisfied. Of course, we could all complain. We all have to make sacrifices, as I told Mrs Otherly.

*Mrs Otherly.* Thank you, Mr President, for what you've said. I must try to think about it. But I always believed war to be wrong. I didn't want my boy to go, because I believed it to be wrong. But he would. That came to me last week.

[*She hands a paper to Lincoln.*

*Lincoln* (looks at it, rises, and hands it back to her). Ma'am, there are times when no man may speak. I grieve for you, I grieve for you.

*Mrs Otherly* (rising). I think I will go. You don't mind my saying what I did?



*Lincoln.* We are all poor creatures, ma'am. Abraham  
Think kindly of me. (*He takes her hand.*) Mary. Lincoln

[*Mrs Lincoln goes out with Mrs Otherly.*]

*Mrs Blow.* Of course it's very sad for her, poor woman. But she makes her trouble worse by these perverted views, doesn't she? And, I hope you will show no signs of weakening, Mr President, till it has been made impossible for those shameful rebels to hold up their heads again. Goliath says you ought to make a proclamation that no mercy will be shown to them afterwards. I'm sure I shall never speak to one of them again. (*Rising.*) Well, I must be going. I'll see Mrs Lincoln as I go out. Good-afternoon, Mr President.

[*She turns at the door, and offers Lincoln her hand, which he does not take.*]

*Lincoln.* Good-afternoon, madam. And I'd like to offer ye a word of advice. That poor mother told me what she thought. I don't agree with her, but I honour her. She's wrong, but she is noble. You've told me what you think. I don't agree with you, and I'm ashamed of you and your like. You, who have sacrificed nothing, babble about destroying the South while other people conquer it. I accepted this war with a sick heart, and I've a heart that's near to breaking every day. I accepted it in the name of humanity, and just and

merciful dealing, and the hope of love and charity on earth. And you come to me, talking of revenge and destruction, and malice, and enduring hate. These gentle people are mistaken, but they are mistaken cleanly, and in a great name. It is you that dishonour the cause for which we stand—it is you who would make it a mean and little thing. Good-afternoon.

*[He opens the door and Mrs Goliath, finding words inadequate, goes. Lincoln moves across the room and rings a bell. After a moment, Susan comes in.]*

*Lincoln.* Susan, if that lady comes here again she may meet with an accident.

*Susan.* Yes, sir. Is that all, sir ?

*Lincoln.* No, sir, it is not all, sir. I don't like this coat. I am going to change it. I shall be back in a minute or two, and if a gentleman named Mr Frederick Douglass calls, ask him to wait in here.

*[He goes out. Susan collects the teacups. As she is going to the door a quiet, grave white-haired negro appears facing her. Susan starts violently.]*

*The Negro (he talks slowly and very quietly).* It is all right.

*Susan.* And who in the name of night might you be ?

*The Negro.* Mista Frederick Douglass. Mista Abraham Lincoln tell me to come here. Nobody stop me, so I come to look for him.

*Susan.* Are you Mr Frederick Douglass ?

*Douglass.* Yes.

*Susan.* Mr Lincoln will be here directly. He's gone to change his coat. You'd better sit down.

*Douglass.* Yes.

*[He does so, looking about him with a certain pathetic inquisitiveness.]*

Mista Lincoln live here. You his servant ? A very fine thing for young girl to be servant to Mista Lincoln.

*Susan.* Well, we get on very well together.

*Douglass.* A very bad thing to be slave in South.

*Susan.* Look here, you Mr Douglass, don't you go mixing me up with slaves.

*Douglass.* No, you not slave. You servant, but you free body. That very mighty thing. A poor servant, born free.

*Susan.* Yes, but look here, are you pitying me, with your poor servant ?

*Douglass.* Pity ? No. I think you very mighty.

*Susan.* Well, I don't know so much about mighty. But I expect you're right. It isn't everyone that rises to the White House.

*Douglass.* It not everyone that is free body. That is why you mighty.

*Susan.* I've never thought much about it.

*Douglass.* I think always about it.

*Susan.* I suppose you're free, aren't you ?

*Douglass.* Yes. Not born free. I was beaten when I a little nigger. I saw my mother— I will not remember what I saw.

*Susan.* I'm sorry, Mr Douglass. That was wrong.

*Douglass.* Yes. Wrong.

*Susan.* Are all nig— I mean are all black gentlemen like you ?

*Douglass.* No. I have advantages. They not many have advantages.

*Susan.* No, I suppose not. Here's Mr Lincoln coming.

*[Lincoln, coated after his heart's desire, comes to the door. Douglass rises.]*

*Susan.* This is the gentleman you said, sir.

*[She goes out with the tray.]*

*Lincoln.* Mr Douglass, I'm very glad to see you.

*[He offers his hand. Douglass takes it, and is about to kiss it. Lincoln stops him gently.]*

*Lincoln (sitting).* Sit down, will you ?

*Douglass (still standing, keeping his hat in his*

hand). It very kind of Mista Lincoln ask me to  
come to see him. Abraham  
Lincoln

*Lincoln.* I was afraid you might refuse.

*Douglass.* A little shy? Yes. But so much to  
ask. Glad to come.

*Lincoln.* Please sit down.

*Douglass.* Polite?

*Lincoln.* Please. I can't sit myself, you see, if  
you don't.

*Douglass.* Black, black. White, white.

*Lincoln.* Nonsense. Just two old men, sitting  
together (*Douglass sits to Lincoln's gesture*)—and  
talking.

*Douglass.* I think I older man than Mista  
Lincoln.

*Lincoln.* Yes, I expect you are. I'm fifty-four.

*Douglass.* I seventy-two.

*Lincoln.* I hope I shall look as young when I'm  
seventy-two.

*Douglass.* Cold water. Much walk. Believe in  
Lord Jesus Christ. Have always little herbs learnt  
when a little nigger. Mista Lincoln try. Very  
good.

[*He hands a small twist of paper to Lincoln.*]

*Lincoln.* Now, that's uncommon kind of you.  
Thank you. I've heard much about your preaching,  
Mr Douglass.

*Douglass.* Yes.

*Lincoln.* I should like to hear you.

*Douglass.* Mista Lincoln great friend of my people.

*Lincoln.* I have come at length to a decision.

*Douglass.* A decision ?

*Lincoln.* Slavery is going. We have been resolved always to confine it. Now it shall be abolished.

*Douglass.* You sure ?

*Lincoln.* Sure.

*[Douglass slowly stands up, bows his head, and sits again.]*

*Douglass.* My people much to learn. Years, and years, and years. Ignorant, frightened, suspicious people. It will be difficult, very slow. *(With growing passion.)* But born free bodies. Free. I born slave, Mista Lincoln. No man understand who not born slave.

*Lincoln.* Yes, yes. I understand.

*Douglass (with his normal regularity).* I think so. Yes.

*Lincoln.* I should like you to ask me any question you wish.

*Douglass.* I have some complaint. Perhaps I not understand.

*Lincoln.* Tell me.

*Douglass.* Southern soldiers take some black men

prisoner. Black men in your uniform. Take them  
prisoner. Then murder them. Abraham  
Lincoln

*Lincoln.* I know.

*Douglass.* What you do ?

*Lincoln.* We have sent a protest.

*Douglass.* No good. Must do more.

*Lincoln.* What more can we do ?

*Douglass.* You know.

*Lincoln.* Yes ; but don't ask me for reprisals.

*Douglass (gleaming).* Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth.

*Lincoln.* No, no. You must think. Think what you are saying.

*Douglass.* I think of murdered black men.

*Lincoln.* You would not ask me to murder ?

*Douglass.* Punish—not murder.

*Lincoln.* Yes, murder. How can I kill men in cold blood for what has been done by others ? Think what would follow. It is for us to set a great example, not to follow a wicked one. You do believe that, don't you ?

*Douglass (after a pause).* I know. Yes. Let your light so shine before men. I trust Mista Lincoln. Will trust. I was wrong. I was too sorry for my people.

*Lincoln.* Will you remember this ? For more than two years I have thought of you every day. I

have grown a weary man with thinking. But I shall not forget. I promise that.

*Douglass.* You great, kind friend. I will love you. *[A knock at the door.]*

*Lincoln.* Yes. *[Susan comes in.]*

*Susan.* An officer gentleman. He says it's very important.

*Lincoln.* I'll come. *[He and Douglass rise.]*

Wait, will you, Mr Douglass. I want to ask you some questions.

*[He goes out. It is getting dark, and Susan lights a lamp and draws the curtains. Douglass stands by the door looking after Lincoln.]*

*Douglass.* He very good man.

*Susan.* You've found that out, have you ?

*Douglass.* Do you love him, you white girl ?

*Susan.* Of course I do.

*Douglass.* Yes, you must.

*Susan.* He's a real white man. No offence, of course.

*Douglass.* Not offend. He talk to me as if black no difference.

*Susan.* But I tell you what, Mr Douglass. He'll kill himself over this war, his heart's that kind—like a shorn lamb, as they say.

*Douglass.* Very unhappy war.



Susan. But I suppose he's right. It's got to go on till it's settled. Abraham Lincoln

*[In the street below a body of people is heard approaching, singing "John Brown's Body." Douglass and Susan stand listening, Susan joining in the song as it passes and fades away.]*

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS

*First Chronicler.* Unchanged our time. And further yet

In loneliness must be the way,  
And difficult and deep the debt  
Of constancy to pay.

*Second Chronicler.* And one denies, and one forsakes.

And still unquestioning he goes,  
Who has his lonely thoughts, and makes  
A world of those.

*The two together.* When the high heart we magnify,  
And the sure vision celebrate,  
And worship greatness passing by,  
Ourselves are great.

#### SCENE IV

*About the same date. A meeting of the Cabinet at Washington. Smith has gone and Cameron has been replaced by Edwin Stanton, Secretary of War. Otherwise the ministry, completed by Seward, Chase, Hook, Blair, and Welles, is as before. They are now arranging themselves at the table, leaving Lincoln's place empty.*

*Seward (coming in).* I've just had my summons. Is there some special news?

*Stanton.* Yes. McClellan has defeated Lee at Antietam. It's our greatest success. They ought not to recover from it. The tide is turning.

*Blair.* Have you seen the President?

*Stanton.* I've just been with him.

*Welles.* What does he say?

*Stanton.* He only said "at last." He's coming directly.

*Hook.* He will bring up his proclamation again. In my opinion it is inopportune.

*Seward.* Well, we've learnt by now that the President is the best man among us.

*Hook.* There's a good deal of feeling against him everywhere, I find.

*Blair.* He's the one man with character enough for this business.

*Hook.* There are other opinions.

Abraham  
Lincoln

*Seward.* Yes, but not here, surely.

*Hook.* It's not for me to say. But I ask you, what does he mean about emancipation? I've always understood that it was the Union we were fighting for, and that abolition was to be kept in our minds for legislation at the right moment. And now one day he talks as though emancipation were his only concern, and the next as though he would throw up the whole idea, if by doing it he could secure peace with the establishment of the Union. Where are we?

*Seward.* No, you're wrong. It's the Union first now with him, but there's no question about his views on slavery. You know that perfectly well. But he has always kept his policy about slavery free in his mind, to be directed as he thought best for the sake of the Union. You remember his words: "If I could save the Union without freeing any slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union." Nothing could be plainer than that, just as nothing could be plainer than his determination to free the slaves when he can.

*Hook.* Well, there are some who would have acted differently.

*Blair.* And you may depend upon it they would not have acted so wisely.

*Stanton.* I don't altogether agree with the President. But he's the only man I should agree with at all.

*Hook.* To issue the proclamation now, and that's what he will propose, mark my word, will be to confuse the public mind just when we want to keep it clear.

*Welles.* Are you sure he will propose to issue it now ?

*Hook.* You see if he doesn't.

*Welles.* If he does I shall support him.

*Seward.* Is Lee's army broken ?

*Stanton.* Not yet—but it is in grave danger.

*Hook.* Why doesn't the President come ? One would think this news was nothing.

*Chase.* I must say I'm anxious to know what he has to say about it all. [*A Clerk comes in.*]

*Clerk.* The President's compliments, and he will be here in a moment. [*He goes.*]

*Hook.* I shall oppose it if it comes up.

*Chase.* He may say nothing about it.

*Seward.* I think he will.

*Stanton.* Anyhow, it's the critical moment.

Blair. Here he comes.

Abraham  
Lincoln

[*Lincoln comes in carrying a small book.*]

Lincoln. Good-morning, gentlemen.

[*He takes his place.*]

The Ministers. Good-morning, Mr President.

Seward. Great news, we hear.

Hook. If we leave things with the army to take their course for a little now, we ought to see through our difficulties.

Lincoln. It's an exciting morning, gentlemen. I feel rather excited myself. I find my mind not at its best in excitement. Will you allow me ?

[*Opening his book.*]

It may compose us all. It is Mr Artemus Ward's latest.

[*The Ministers, with the exception of Hook, who makes no attempt to hide his irritation, and Stanton, who would do the same but for his disapproval of Hook, listen with good-humoured patience and amusement while he reads the following passage from Artemus Ward.*]

“High-Handed Outrage at Utica.”

“In the Faul of 1856, I showed my show in Utiky, a trooly grate sitty in the State of New York. The people gave me a cordual recepshun. The press was loud in her prases. I day as I was

givin a descriphun of my Beests and Snaiks in my usual flowry stile what was my skorn & disgust to see a big burly feller walk up to the cage containin my wax figgers of the Lord's Last Supper, and cease Judas Iscarrot by the feet and drag him out on the ground. He then commenced fur to pound him as hard as he cood.

“ ‘ What under the son are you about ? ’ cried I.

“ Sez he, ‘ What did you bring this pussylanermus cuss here fur ? ’ & he hit the wax figger another tremenjis blow on the hed.

“ Sez I, ‘ You egregious ass, that air's a wax figger—a representashun of the false 'Postle.' ”

“ Sez he, ‘ That's all very well fur you to say ; but I tell you, old man, that Judas Iscarrot can't show hisself in Utiky with impunerty by a darn site ! ’ with which observashun he kaved in Judassis hed. The young man belonged to 1 of the first famerlies in Utiky. I sood him, and the Joory brawt in a verdick of Arson in the 3d degree.”

*Stanton.* May we now consider affairs of state ?

*Hook.* Yes, we may.

*Lincoln.* Mr Hook says, yes, we may.

*Stanton.* Thank you.

*Lincoln.* Oh, no. Thank Mr Hook.

*Seward.* McClellan is in pursuit of Lee, I suppose.

*Lincoln.* You suppose a good deal. But for the

first time McClellan has the chance of being in pursuit of Lee, and that's the first sign of their end. If McClellan doesn't take his chance, we'll move Grant down to the job. That will mean delay, but no matter. The mastery has changed hands.

Abraham  
Lincoln

*Blair.* Grant drinks.

*Lincoln.* Then tell me the name of his brand. I'll send some barrels to the others. He wins victories.

*Hook.* Is there other business ?

*Lincoln.* There is. Some weeks ago I showed you a draft I made proclaiming freedom for all slaves.

*Hook (aside to Welles).* I told you so.

*Lincoln.* You thought then it was not the time to issue it. I agreed. I think the moment has come. May I read it to you again ? "It is proclaimed that on the first day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any state, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free." That allows three months from to-day. There are clauses dealing with compensation in a separate draft.

*Hook.* I must oppose the issue of such a proclamation at this moment in the most unqualified



terms. This question should be left until our victory is complete. To thrust it forward now would be to invite dissension when we most need unity.

*Welles.* I do not quite understand, Mr President, why you think this the precise moment.

*Lincoln.* Believe me, gentlemen, I have considered this matter with all the earnestness and understanding of which I am capable.

*Hook.* But when the *New York Tribune* urged you to come forward with a clear declaration six months ago, you rebuked them.

*Lincoln.* Because I thought the occasion not the right one. It was useless to issue a proclamation that might be as inoperative as the Pope's bull against the comet. My duty, it has seemed to me, has been to be loyal to a principle, and not to betray it by expressing it in action at the wrong time. That is what I conceive statesmanship to be. For long now I have had two fixed resolves. To preserve the Union, and to abolish slavery. How to preserve the Union I was always clear, and more than two years of bitterness have not dulled my vision. We have fought for the Union, and we are now winning for the Union. When and how to proclaim abolition I have all this time been uncertain. I am uncertain no longer. A few



weeks ago I saw that, too, clearly. So soon, I said to myself, as the rebel army shall be driven out of Maryland, and it becomes plain to the world that victory is assured to us in the end, the time will have come to announce that with that victory and a vindicated Union, will come abolition. I made the promise to myself—and to my Maker. The rebel army is now driven out, and I am going to fulfil that promise. I do not wish your advice about the main matter, for that I have determined for myself. This I say without intending anything but respect for any one of you. But I beg you to stand with me in this thing.

Abraham  
Lincoln

*Hook.* In my opinion, it's altogether too impetuous.

*Lincoln.* One other observation I will make. I know very well that others might in this matter, as in others, do better than I can; and if I was satisfied that the public confidence was more fully possessed by any one of them than by me, and knew of any constitutional way in which he could be put in my place, he should have it. I would gladly yield it to him. But, though I cannot claim undivided confidence, I do not know that, all things considered, any other person has more; and, however this may be, there is no way in which I can have any other man put where I am. I am here;

I must do the best I can, and bear the responsibility of taking the course which I feel I ought to take.

*Stanton.* Could this be left over a short time for consideration ?

*Chase.* I feel that we should remember that our only public cause at the moment is the preservation of the Union.

*Hook.* I entirely agree.

*Lincoln.* Gentlemen, we cannot escape history. We of this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. In giving freedom to the slave we assure freedom to the free. We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope on earth.

*[He places the proclamation in front of him.]*

"Shall be thenceforward and forever free."

Gentlemen, I pray for your support.

*[He signs it.]*

*[The Ministers rise. Seward, Welles and Blair shake Lincoln's hand and go out. Stanton and Chase bow to him, and follow. Hook, the last to rise, moves away, making no sign.]*

*Lincoln.* Hook.

*Hook.* Yes, Mr President.

*Lincoln.* Hook, one cannot help hearing things.

*Hook.* I beg your pardon ?

Abraham  
Lincoln

*Lincoln.* Hook, there's a way some people have, when a man says a disagreeable thing, of asking him to repeat it, hoping to embarrass him. It's often effective. But I'm not easily embarrassed. I said, one cannot help hearing things.

*Hook.* And I do not understand what you mean, Mr President.

*Lincoln.* Come, Hook, we're alone. Lincoln is a good enough name. And I think you understand.

*Hook.* How should I ?

*Lincoln.* Then, plainly, there are intrigues going on.

*Hook.* Against the government ?

*Lincoln.* No. In it. Against me.

*Hook.* Criticism, perhaps.

*Lincoln.* To what end ? To better my ways ?

*Hook.* I presume that might be the purpose.

*Lincoln.* Then why am I not told what it is ?

*Hook.* I imagine it's a natural compunction.

*Lincoln.* Or ambition ?

*Hook.* What do you mean ?

*Lincoln.* You think you ought to be in my place.

*Hook.* You are well informed.

*Lincoln.* You cannot imagine why everyone does not see that you ought to be in my place.

*Hook.* By what right do you say that ?

*Lincoln.* Is it not true ?

*Hook.* You take me unprepared. You have me at a disadvantage.

*Lincoln.* You speak as a very scrupulous man, Hook.

*Hook.* Do you question my honour ?

*Lincoln.* As you will.

*Hook.* Then I resign.

*Lincoln.* As a protest against . . . ?

*Hook.* Your suspicion.

*Lincoln.* Is it false ?

*Hook.* Very well, I will be frank. I mistrust your judgment.

*Lincoln.* In what ?

*Hook.* Generally. You over-emphasise abolition.

*Lincoln.* You don't mean that. You mean that you fear possible public feeling against abolition.

*Hook.* It must be persuaded, not forced.

*Lincoln.* All the most worthy elements in it are persuaded. But the ungenerous elements make the most noise, and you hear them only. You will run from the terrible name of Abolitionist even when it is pronounced by worthless creatures whom you know you have every reason to despise.

*Hook.* You have, in my opinion, failed in necessary firmness in saying what will be the individual penalties of rebellion.

*Lincoln.* This is a war. I will not allow it to become a blood-feud.

*Hook.* We are fighting treason. We must meet it with severity. Abraham  
Lincoln

*Lincoln.* We will defeat treason. And I will meet it with conciliation.

*Hook.* It is a policy of weakness.

*Lincoln.* It is a policy of faith—it is a policy of compassion. (*Warmly.*) Hook, why do you plague me with these jealousies? Once before I found a member of my Cabinet working behind my back. But he was disinterested, and he made amends nobly. But, Hook, you have allowed the burden of these days to sour you. I know it all. I've watched you plotting and plotting for authority. And I, who am a lonely man, have been sick at heart. So great is the task God has given to my hand, and so few are my days, and my deepest hunger is always for loyalty in my own house. You have withheld it from me. You have done great service in your office, but you have grown envious. Now you resign, as you did once before when I came openly to you in friendship. And you think that again I shall flatter you and coax you to stay. I don't think I ought to do it. I will not do it. I must take you at your word.

*Hook.* I am content. [*He turns to go.*]

*Lincoln.* Will you shake hands?

*Hook.* I beg you will excuse me.

[*He goes. Lincoln stands silently for a moment, a travelled, lonely captain. He rings a bell, and a Clerk comes in.*

*Lincoln.* Ask Mr Slaney to come in.

*Clerk.* Yes, sir.

[*He goes. Lincoln, from the folds of his pockets, produces another book, and holds it unopened. Slaney comes in.*

*Lincoln.* I'm rather tired to-day, Slaney. Read to me a little. (*He hands him the book.*) *The Tempest*—you know the passage.

*Slaney (reading).* Our revels now are ended ;  
these our actors,

As I foretold you, were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air ;  
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.

*Lincoln.* We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life . . .

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS

*First Chronicler.* Two years again.  
Desolation of battle, and long debate,  
Counsels and prayers of men,  
And bitterness of destruction and witless hate,  
And the shame of lie contending with lie,  
Are spending themselves, and the brain  
That set its lonely chart four years gone by,  
Knowing the word fulfilled,  
Comes with charity and communion to bring  
To reckoning,  
To reconcile and build.

Abraham  
Lincoln

*The two together.* What victor coming from the  
field  
Leaving the victim desolate,  
But has a vulnerable shield  
Against the substances of fate ?  
That battle's won that leads in chains  
But retribution and despite,  
And bids misfortune count her gains  
Not stricken in a penal night.

His triumph is but bitterness  
Who looks not to the starry doom  
When proud and humble but possess  
The little kingdom of the tomb.

Who, striking home, shall not forgive,  
Strikes with a weak returning rod,  
Claiming a fond prerogative  
Against the armoury of God.

Who knows, and for his knowledge stands  
Against the darkness in dispute,  
And dedicates industrious hands,  
And keeps a spirit resolute,  
Prevailing in the battle, then  
A steward of his word is made,  
To bring it honour among men,  
Or know his captaincy betrayed.

#### SCENE V

*An April evening in 1865. A farmhouse near Appomatox. General Grant, Commander-in-chief, under Lincoln, of the Northern armies, is seated at a table with Captain Malins, an aide-de-camp. He is smoking a cigar, and at intervals he replenishes his glass of whiskey. Dennis, an orderly, sits at a table in the corner, writing.*

*Grant (consulting a large watch lying in front of him). An hour and a half. There ought to be something more from Meade by now. Dennis.*



*Dennis (coming to the table).* Yes, sir.

Abraham  
Lincoln

*Grant.* Take these papers to Captain Templeman, and ask Colonel West if the twenty-third are in action yet. Tell the cook to send some soup at ten o'clock. Say it was cold yesterday.

*Dennis.* Yes, sir.

[*He goes.*]

*Grant.* Give me that map, Malins.

[*Malins hands him the map at which he is working.*]

*Grant (after studying it in silence).* Yes. There's no doubt about it. Unless Meade goes to sleep it can only be a question of hours. Lee's a great man, but he can't get out of that.

[*Making a ring on the map with his finger.*]

*Malins (taking the map again).* This ought to be the end, sir.

*Grant.* Yes. If Lee surrenders, we can all pack up for home.

*Malins.* By God, sir, it will be splendid, won't it, to be back again?

*Grant.* By God, sir, it will.

*Malins.* I beg your pardon, sir.

*Grant.* You're quite right, Malins. My boy goes to school next week. My word, I may be able to go down with him and see him settled in.

[*Dennis comes back.*]

*Dennis.* Colonel West says, yes, sir, for the last

half hour. The cook says he's sorry, sir. It was a mistake.

Grant. Tell him to keep his mistakes in the kitchen.

Dennis. I will, sir.

*[He goes back to his place.]*

Grant (at his papers). Those rifles went up this afternoon ?

Malins. Yes, sir.

*[Another Orderly comes in.]*

Orderly. Mr Lincoln has just arrived, sir. He's in the yard now.

Grant. All right, I'll come.

*[The Orderly goes. Grant rises and crosses to the door, but is met there by Lincoln and Slaney. Lincoln, in top boots and tall hat that has seen many campaigns, shakes hands with Grant and takes Malins' salute.]*

Grant. I wasn't expecting you, sir.

Lincoln. No ; but I couldn't keep away. How's it going ? *[They sit.]*

Grant. Meade sent word an hour and a half ago that Lee was surrounded all but two miles, which was closing in.

Lincoln. That ought about to settle it, eh ?

Grant. Unless anything goes wrong in those two

miles, sir. I'm expecting a further report from Abraham Meade every minute. Lincoln

*Lincoln.* Would there be more fighting ?

*Grant.* It will probably mean fighting through the night, more or less. But Lee must realise it's hopeless by the morning.

*An Orderly (entering).* A dispatch, sir.

*Grant.* Yes.

*[The Orderly goes, and a Young Officer comes in from the field. He salutes and hands a dispatch to Grant.]*

*Officer.* From General Meade, sir.

*Grant (taking it).* Thank you.

*[He opens it and reads.]*

You needn't wait.

*[The Officer salutes and goes.]*

Yes, they've closed the ring. Meade gives them ten hours. It's timed at eight. That's six o'clock in the morning.

*[He hands the dispatch to Lincoln.]*

*Lincoln.* We must be merciful. Bob Lee has been a gallant fellow.

*Grant (taking a paper).* Perhaps you'll look through this list, sir. I hope it's the last we shall have.

*Lincoln (taking the paper).* It's a horrible part of the business, Grant. Any shootings ?

*Grant.* One.

*Lincoln.* Damn it, Grant, why can't you do without it? No, no, of course not. Who is it?

*Grant.* Malins.

*Malins* (*opening a book*). William Scott, sir. It's rather a hard case.

*Lincoln.* What is it?

*Malins.* He had just done a heavy march, sir, and volunteered for double guard duty to relieve a sick friend. He was found asleep at his post.

[*He shuts the book.*]

*Grant.* I was anxious to spare him. But it couldn't be done. It was a critical place, at a gravely critical time.

*Lincoln.* When is it to be?

*Malins.* To-morrow, at daybreak, sir.

*Lincoln.* I don't see that it will do him any good to be shot. Where is he?

*Malins.* Here, sir.

*Lincoln.* Can I go and see him?

*Grant.* Where is he?

*Malins.* In the barn, I believe, sir.

*Grant.* Dennis.

*Dennis* (*coming from his table*). Yes, sir.

*Grant.* Ask them to bring Scott in here.

[*Dennis goes.*]

I want to see Colonel West. Malins, ask Temple- Abraham  
man if those figures are ready yet. Lincoln

*[He goes, and Malins follows.]*

Lincoln. Will you, Slaney.

*[Slaney goes. After a moment, during which Lincoln takes the book that Malins has been reading from, and looks into it, William Scott is brought in under guard. He is a boy of twenty.]*

Lincoln (to the Guard). Thank you. Wait outside, will you ?

*[The Men salute and withdraw.]*

Are you William Scott ?

Scott. Yes, sir.

Lincoln. You know who I am ?

Scott. Yes, sir.

Lincoln. The General tells me you've been court-martialled.

Scott. Yes, sir.

Lincoln. Asleep on guard ?

Scott. Yes, sir.

Lincoln. It's a very serious offence.

Scott. I know, sir.

Lincoln. What was it ?

Scott (a pause). I couldn't keep awake, sir.

Lincoln. You'd had a long march ?

Scott. Twenty-three miles, sir.

*Lincoln.* You were doing double guard ?

*Scott.* Yes, sir.

*Lincoln.* Who ordered you ?

*Scott.* Well, sir, I offered.

*Lincoln.* Why ?

*Scott.* Enoch White—he was sick, sir. We come from the same place.

*Lincoln.* Where's that ?

*Scott.* Vermont, sir.

*Lincoln.* You live there ?

*Scott.* Yes, sir. My . . . we've got a farm down there, sir.

*Lincoln.* Who has ?

*Scott.* My mother, sir. I've got her photograph, sir. [*He takes it from his pocket.*]

*Lincoln (taking it).* Does she know about this ?

*Scott.* For God's sake, don't, sir.

*Lincoln.* There, there, my boy. You're not going to be shot.

*Scott (after a pause).* Not going to be shot, sir.

*Lincoln.* No, no.

*Scott.* Not—going—to—be—shot.

[*He breaks down, sobbing.*]

*Lincoln (rising and going to him).* There, there. I believe you when you tell me that you couldn't keep awake. I'm going to trust you, and send you back to your regiment. [*He goes back to his seat.*]

Scott. When may I go back, sir ?

Lincoln. You can go back to-morrow. I expect the fighting will be over, though.

Scott. Is it over yet, sir ?

Lincoln. Not quite.

Scott. Please, sir, let me go back to-night—let me go back to-night.

Lincoln. Very well. [He writes.

Do you know where General Meade is ?

Scott. No, sir.

Lincoln. Ask one of those men to come here.

[Scott calls one of his guards in.

Lincoln. Your prisoner is discharged. Take him at once to General Meade with this.

[He hands a note to the man.

The Soldier. Yes, sir.

Scott. Thank you, sir.

[He salutes and goes out with the Soldier.

Lincoln. Slaney.

Slaney (outside). Yes, sir. [He comes in.

Lincoln. What's the time ?

Slaney (looking at the watch on the table). Just on half-past nine, sir.

Lincoln. I shall sleep here for a little. You'd better shake down too. They'll wake us if there's any news.

[Lincoln wraps himself up on two chairs.

*Slaney follows suit on a bench. After a few moments Grant comes to the door, sees what has happened, blows out the candles quietly, and goes away.*

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS

*The First Chronicler.* Under the stars an end is  
made,  
And on the field the southern blade  
Lies broken,  
And, where strife was, shall union be,  
And, where was bondage, liberty.  
The word is spoken . . .  
Night passes.

*The Curtain rises on the same scene, Lincoln and Slaney still lying asleep. The light of dawn fills the room. The Orderly comes in with two smoking cups of coffee and some biscuits. Lincoln wakes.*

*Lincoln.* Good-morning.

*Orderly.* Good-morning, sir.

*Lincoln (taking coffee and biscuits).* Thank you.



[*The Orderly turns to Slaney, who sleeps on, and he hesitates.* Abraham Lincoln

Lincoln. Slaney. (*Shouting.*) Slaney.

Slaney (*starting up*). Hullo! What the devil is it? I beg you pardon, sir.

Lincoln. Not at all. Take a little coffee.

Slaney. Thank you, sir.

[*He takes coffee and biscuits. The Orderly goes.*

Lincoln. Slept well, Slaney?

Slaney. I feel a little crumpled, sir. I think I fell off once.

Lincoln. What's the time?

Slaney (*looking at the watch*). Six o'clock, sir.

[*Grant comes in.*

Grant. Good-morning, sir, good-morning, Slaney.

Lincoln. Good-morning, general.

Slaney. Good-morning, sir.

Grant. I didn't disturb you last night. A message has just come from Meade. Lee asked for an armistice at four o'clock.

Lincoln (*after a silence*). For four years life has been but the hope of this moment. It is strange how simple it is when it comes. Grant, you've served the country very truly. And you've made my work possible.

[*He takes his hand.*

Thank you.

*Grant.* Had I failed, the fault would not have been yours, sir. I succeeded because you believed in me.

*Lincoln.* Where is Lee?

*Grant.* He's coming here. Meade should arrive directly.

*Lincoln.* Where will Lee wait?

*Grant.* There's a room ready for him. Will you receive him, sir?

*Lincoln.* No, no, Grant. That's your affair. You are to mention no political matters. Be generous. But I needn't say that.

*Grant* (taking a paper from his pocket). Those are the terms I suggest.

*Lincoln* (reading). Yes, yes. They do you honour.

[*He places the paper on the table. An Orderly comes in.*]

*Orderly.* General Meade is here, sir.

*Grant.* Ask him to come here.

*Orderly.* Yes, sir.

[*He goes.*]

*Grant.* I learnt a good deal from Robert Lee in early days. He's a better man than most of us. This business will go pretty near the heart, sir.

*Lincoln.* I'm glad it's to be done by a brave gentleman, Grant.

[General Meade and Captain Sone, his Abraham  
aide-de-camp, come in. Meade salutes. Lincoln

Lincoln. Congratulations, Meade. You've done well.

Meade. Thank you, sir.

Grant. Was there much more fighting ?

Meade. Pretty hot for an hour or two.

Grant. How long will Lee be ?

Meade. Only a few minutes, I should say, sir.

Grant. You said nothing about terms ?

Meade. No, sir.

Lincoln. Did a boy Scott come to you ?

Meade. Yes, sir. He went into action at once. He was killed, wasn't he, Sone ?

Sone. Yes, sir.

Lincoln. Killed ? It's a queer world, Grant.

Meade. Is there any proclamation to be made, sir, about the rebels ?

Grant. I —.

Lincoln. No, no. I'll have nothing of hanging or shooting these men, even the worst of them. Frighten them out of the country, open the gates, let down the bars, scare them off. Shoo !

[He flings out his arms.

Good-bye, Grant. Report at Washington as soon as you can. [He shakes hands with him.

Good-bye, gentlemen. Come along, Slaney.

*[Meade salutes and Lincoln goes, followed by Slaney.]*

*Grant.* Who is with Lee ?

*Meade.* Only one of his staff, sir.

*Grant.* You might see Malins will you, Sone, and let us know directly General Lee comes.

*Sone.* Yes, sir. *[He goes out.]*

*Grant.* Well, Meade, it's been a big job.

*Meade.* Yes, sir.

*Grant.* We've had courage and determination. And we've had wits, to beat a great soldier. I'd say that to any man. But it's Abraham Lincoln, Meade, who has kept us a great cause clean to fight for. It does a man's heart good to know he's given victory to such a man to handle. A glass, Meade ? *(Pouring out whiskey.)* No ? *(Drinking.)*

Do you know, Meade, there were fools who wanted me to oppose Lincoln for the next Presidency. I've got my vanities, but I know better than that.

*[Malins comes in.]*

*Malins.* General Lee is here, sir.

*Grant.* Meade, will General Lee do me the honour of meeting me here ?

*[Meade salutes and goes.]*

*Grant.* Where the deuce is my hat, Malins ? And sword.

Malins. Here, sir.

Abraham  
Lincoln

[*Malins gets them for him. Meade and Sone come in, and stand by the door at attention. Robert Lee, General-in-Chief of the Confederate forces, comes in, followed by one of his staff. The days of critical anxiety through which he has just lived have marked themselves on Lee's face, but his groomed and punctilious toilet contrasts pointedly with Grant's unconsidered appearance. The two commanders face each other. Grant salutes, and Lee replies.*

Grant. Sir, you have given me occasion to be proud of my opponent.

Lee. I have not spared my strength. I acknowledge its defeat.

Grant. You have come ——

Lee. To ask upon what terms you will accept surrender. Yes.

Grant (*taking the paper from the table and handing it to Lee*). They are simple. I hope you will not find them ungenerous.

Lee (*having read the terms*). You are magnanimous, sir. May I make one submission?

Grant. It would be a privilege if I could consider it.

*Lee.* You allow our officers to keep their horses. That is gracious. Our cavalry troopers' horses also are their own.

*Grant.* I understand. They will be needed on the farms. It shall be done.

*Lee.* I thank you. It will do much towards conciliating our people. I accept your terms.

*[Lee unbuckles his sword, and offers it to Grant.]*

*Grant.* No, no. I should have included that. It has but one rightful place. I beg you.

*[Lee replaces his sword. Grant offers his hand and Lee takes it. They salute, and Lee turns to go.]*

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS

##### *The two Chroniclers.*

A wind blows in the night,  
And the pride of the rose is gone,  
It laboured, and was delight,  
And rains fell, and shone  
Suns of the summer days,  
And dews washed the bud,  
And thanksgiving and praise  
Was the rose in our blood.

And out of the night it came,  
A wind, and the rose fell,  
Shattered its heart of flame,  
And how shall June tell  
The glory that went with May,  
How shall the full year keep  
The beauty that ere its day  
Was blasted into sleep ?

Abraham  
Lincoln

Roses. Oh, heart of man :  
Courage, that in the prime  
Looked on truth, and began  
Conspiracies with time  
To flower upon the pain  
Of dark and envious earth. . . .  
A wind blows, and the brain  
Is the dust that was its birth.

What shall the witness cry,  
He who has seen alone  
With imagination's eye  
The darkness overthrown ?  
Hark : from the long eclipse  
The wise words come—  
A wind blows, and the lips  
Of prophecy are dumb.

## SCENE VI

*The evening of April 14th, 1865. The small lounge of a theatre. On the far side are the doors of three private boxes. There is silence for a few moments. Then the sound of applause comes from the auditorium beyond. The box doors are opened. In the centre box can be seen Lincoln and Stanton, Mrs Lincoln, another lady, and an officer, talking together.*

*The occupants come out from the other boxes into the lounge, where small knots of people have gathered from different directions, and stand or sit talking busily.*

*A Lady.* Very amusing, don't you think ?

*Her Companion.* Oh, yes. But it's hardly true to life, is it ?

*Another Lady.* Isn't that dark girl clever ? What's her name ?

*A Gentleman (consulting his programme).* Eleanor Crowne.

*Another Gentleman.* There's a terrible draught, isn't there. I shall have a stiff neck.

*His Wife.* You should keep your scarf on.

*The Gentleman.* It looks so odd.

*Another Lady.* The President looks very happy this evening, doesn't he ?



*Another.* No wonder, is it ? He must be a proud man. Abraham Lincoln

*[A young man, dressed in black, passes among the people, glancing furtively into Lincoln's box, and disappears. It is John Wilkes Booth.]*

*A Lady* (greeting another). Ah, Mrs Bennington. When do you expect your husband back ?

*[They drift away. Susan, carrying cloaks and wraps, comes in. She goes to the box, and speaks to Mrs Lincoln. Then she comes away, and sits down apart from the crowd to wait.]*

*A Young Man.* I rather think of going on the stage myself. My friends tell me I'm uncommon good. Only I don't think my health would stand it.

*A Girl.* Oh, it must be a very easy life. Just acting—that's easy enough.

*[A cry of "Lincoln" comes through the auditorium. It is taken up, with shouts of "The President," "Speech," "Abraham Lincoln," "Father Abraham," and so on. The conversation in the lounge stops as the talkers turn to listen. After a few moments, Lincoln is seen to rise. There is a burst of cheering. The people in the lounge stand round the box]*



*door. Lincoln holds up his hand, and there is a sudden silence.*

*Lincoln.* My friends, I am touched, deeply touched, by this mark of your good-will. After four dark and difficult years, we have achieved the great purpose for which we set out. General Lee's surrender to General Grant leaves but one confederate force in the field, and the end is immediate and certain. (*Cheers.*) I have but little to say at this moment. I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me. But as events have come before me, I have seen them always with one faith. We have preserved the American Union, and we have abolished a great wrong. (*Cheers.*) The task of reconciliation, of setting order where there is now confusion, of bringing about a settlement at once just and merciful, and of directing the life of a reunited country into prosperous channels of good-will and generosity, will demand all our wisdom, all our loyalty. It is the proudest hope of my life that I may be of some service in this work. (*Cheers.*) Whatever it may be, it can be but little in return for all the kindness and forbearance that I have received. With malice toward none, with charity for all, it is for us to resolve that this nation, under God, shall have a new

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birth of freedom ; and that government of the Abraham  
people, by the people, for the people, shall not Lincoln  
perish from the earth.

*[There is a great sound of cheering. It dies down, and a boy passes through the lounge and calls out, "Last act, ladies and gentlemen." The people disperse, and the box doors are closed. Susan is left alone and there is silence.]*

*After a few moments, Booth appears. He watches Susan and sees that her gaze is fixed away from him. He creeps along to the centre box and disengages a hand from under his cloak. It holds a revolver. Poising himself, he opens the door with a swift movement, fires, flings the door to again, and rushes away. The door is thrown open again, and the Officer follows in pursuit. Inside the box, Mrs Lincoln is kneeling by her husband, who is supported by Stanton. A Doctor runs across the lounge and goes into the box. There is complete silence in the theatre. The door closes again.*

*Susan (who has run to the box door, and is kneeling there, sobbing). Master, master. No, no, not my master.*



[*The other box doors have opened, and the occupants with others have collected in little terror-struck groups in the lounge. Then the centre door opens, and Stanton comes out, closing it behind him.*

*Stanton.* Now he belongs to the ages.

*The Chroniclers speak.*

*First Chronicler.* Events go by. And upon circumstance

Disaster strikes with the blind sweep of chance,  
And this our mimic action was a theme,  
Kinsmen, as life is, clouded as a dream.

*Second Chronicler.* But, as we spoke, presiding  
everywhere

Upon event was one man's character.  
And that endures ; it is the token sent  
Always to man for man's own government.

THE CURTAIN FALLS

# *Oliver Cromwell*



TO  
BERNARD SHAW

THE CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF THEIR  
APPEARANCE ARE—

MRS CROMWELL, *Oliver's Mother*  
ELIZABETH CROMWELL, *his Wife*  
BRIDGET CROMWELL, *his Daughter*  
JOHN HAMPDEN  
HENRY IRETON  
OLIVER CROMWELL  
SETH TANNER  
TWO AGENTS TO THE EARL OF BEDFORD  
AMOS TANNER  
A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
BASSETT, *an Officer of the House*  
THE MAYOR OF ELY  
GENERAL FAIRFAX  
COLONEL STAINES  
COLONEL PEMBERTON  
A SCOUT  
A SURGEON  
AN AIDE  
NEAL, *Secretary to Charles*  
CHARLES I

*Farm Labourers, Members of Parliament*



# Oliver Cromwell

## SCENE I

*Cromwell's house at Ely, about the year 1639. An early summer evening. The window of the room opens on to a smooth lawn, used for bowling, and a garden full of flowers.*

*Oliver's wife, Elizabeth Cromwell, is sitting at the table, sewing. In a chair by the open window Mrs Cromwell, his mother, is reading. She is about eighty years of age.*

*Mrs Cromwell.* Oliver troubles me, persuading everywhere. Restless like this.

*Elizabeth.* He says that the time is uneasy, and that we are part of it.

*Mrs Cromwell.* There's a man's house. It's enough surely.

*Elizabeth.* I know. But Oliver must be doing. You know how when he took the magistracy he would listen to none of us. He knows best.

*Mrs Cromwell.* What time is John coming?

*Elizabeth.* By nightfall he said. Henry Ireton is coming with him.

*Mrs Cromwell.* John Hampden is like that, too. He excites the boy.

*Elizabeth.* Yes, but, mother, you will do nothing with Oliver by thinking of him as a boy.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Of course he's a boy.

*Elizabeth.* He's forty.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Methuselah.

*Elizabeth.* What ?

*Mrs Cromwell.* I said Methuselah.

*Elizabeth.* He says John's the bravest man in England.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Just because he won't pay a tax. How if everybody refused to pay taxes ? If you don't have taxes, I don't see how you are to have a government. Though I can't see that it governs anybody, except those that don't need it.

*Elizabeth.* Oliver says it's a wrong tax, this ship-money.

*Mrs Cromwell.* There's always something wrong. It keeps men busy, I suppose.

*Elizabeth.* But it was brave of John.

*Mrs Cromwell.* I know, I know. But why must he come here to-night of all in the year ? Oliver's like somebody out of the Bible about to-morrow as it is. This will make him worse. I wish John no harm, but—well, I hope he's got a bad horse.

*Elizabeth.* Oliver's mind is made up about the common, whatever happens. John will make no difference.

*Mrs Cromwell.* You can't pretend he'll make Oliver  
Cromwell  
him more temperate.

*Elizabeth.* It's very wrong to take away the common from the people. I think Oliver is right.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Of course he's right. But I'm too old. I've seen too many broken heads. He'll be no righter for a broken head.

*[Bridget Cromwell, a girl, comes in. She takes some eggs from her apron and puts them on to a dish on a shelf.]*

*Bridget.* Why, grandmother, whose head is to be broken ?

*Mrs Cromwell.* Your father's is like to be.

*Bridget.* You mean to-morrow ?

*Elizabeth.* At the meeting, yes.

*Bridget.* But he must do it. Why, the people have fished and kept cattle there longer than any one can remember. Who is an Earl of Bedford to take it away from them ? I know I would let my head be broken first.

*Elizabeth.* It is said that the king gave leave.

*Bridget.* Then the king gave what wasn't his to give.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Now, child, don't you encourage your father, too. He's eager enough without that.

*Bridget.* But I must, grandmother. There's too

much of this kind of interference everywhere. Father says that cousin John Hampden says —

*Mrs Cromwell.* And that's three of you in one house. And this young Mr Ireton has ideas, too, I believe.

*Bridget.* Mr Ireton is twenty-eight.

*Mrs Cromwell.* That accounts for it.

*Bridget.* You don't think they just ought to be allowed to take the common away, do you, grandmother ?

*Mrs Cromwell.* It makes no matter what I think.

*Bridget.* Of course you don't. None of us do. We couldn't.

*Elizabeth.* You mustn't tease your grandmother, Bridget.

*Mrs Cromwell.* She's a very old lady, and can't speak for herself.

*Bridget.* I meant no ill manners, grandmother.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Never mind your manners, child. But don't encourage your father. He doesn't need it. This house is all commotion as it is.

*Bridget.* I can't help it. There's so much going on everywhere—the king doesn't deal fairly by people, I'm sure. Men like father must say it.

*Elizabeth.* Have you put the lavender in the rooms ?

*Bridget.* No. I'll take it now.

[*She takes a tray from the window and goes out.* Oliver  
Cromwell

*Mrs Cromwell.* I don't know what will happen. I sometimes think the world isn't worth quarrelling about at all. And yet I'm a silly old woman to talk like that. But Oliver is a brave fellow—and John, all of them. I want them to be brave in peace—that's the way you think at eighty. (*Reading.*) This Mr Donne is a very good poet, but he's rather hard to understand. I suppose that is being eighty too. Mr Herrick is very simple. John Hampden sent me some copies from a friend who knows Mr Herrick. I like them better than John does. [*She takes up a MS. book and reads.*

Lord, Thou hast given me a cell  
Wherein to dwell ;  
A little house, whose humble roof  
Is waterproof ;  
Under the spars of which I lie  
Both soft and dry. . . .

But Mr Shakespeare was best of all, I do believe. A very civil gentleman, too. I spoke to him once—that was forty years ago, the year Oliver was born, I remember. He didn't hold with all this talk against kings.

*Elizabeth.* There are kings and kings. Oliver finds no offence in kings—it's in a king.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Well, it's all very dangerous, and I'm too old for it. Not but what Oliver's brain is better than mine. But we have to sit still and watch. However, Mr Herrick has chosen a nice name for his book: "Hesperides." He has taste as well as understanding.

*[The sound of horsemen arriving is heard.]*

*Elizabeth.* That will be John and Mr Ireton.

*[She looks from the window, puts her work into a box, and goes out.]*

*Mrs Cromwell (turning her pages).*

Ye have been fresh and green,  
Ye have been filled with flowers,  
And ye the walks have been  
Where maids have spent their hours.

Like unthrifths, having spent  
Your stock, and needy grown,  
You're left here to lament  
Your poor estates alone.

*[Elizabeth comes back with John Hampden, aged forty-four, and Henry Ireton, twenty-eight. They both shake hands with Mrs Cromwell.]*

*Hampden.* How do you do, ma'am ?

*Mrs Cromwell.* Well, John.

Oliver  
Cromwell

*Ireton.* Good-evening, ma'am.

*Mrs Cromwell.* You're welcome, Master Ireton, I'm sure. If you behave yourself, young man.

*Ireton.* How may that be, ma'am ?

*Mrs Cromwell.* No, don't ask me. Only don't you and John come putting more notions into Oliver's head. I'm sure he's got more than he can rightly manage as it is.

*Hampden.* We were told down there that it's to-morrow that my lord of Bedford and his like are to claim the common rights.

*Elizabeth.* Yes.

*Ireton.* Mr Cromwell is to resist, they said.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Now, young man, Oliver doesn't need any urging to it. He needs holding back.

*Hampden.* But that's fine for Oliver. Every man must speak to-day—and do as well if it comes to it.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Yes, but don't be so proud about it, John.

*Elizabeth.* I think they should be proud.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Remember what Mr Herbert says.

A servant with this clause  
Makes drudgerie divine :

Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws  
Makes that and th' action fine.

As for thy laws, remember.

*Hampden.* Surely, we shall remember that always.

[*Bridget comes in.*

*Bridget.* Cousin John.

*Hampden.* Well, Bridget, my girl.

[*He kisses her.*

*Bridget.* How do you do, Mr Ireton ?

*Ireton* (*shaking hands*). Well, I thank you, mistress.

*Bridget.* Does father know, mother ?

*Elizabeth.* I've sent down to the field.

*Mrs Cromwell.* He'll be here soon enough. I'm sorry the judges were against you, John. I don't know what else you could expect, though. They are the king's judges, I suppose.

*Hampden.* That's what we dispute, ma'am. The king says that they should serve him. We say that they should serve the laws.

*Ireton.* It was just when Mr Hampden was being heard. The law, they said, was the king's old and loyal servant : that *lex* was not *rex*, but that none could gainsay that *rex* was *lex*.

*Hampden.* That's what we shall have to decide, and before long, I think.



*Bridget.* Father says that.

Oliver  
Cromwell

*Mrs Cromwell.* This house is ready for any kind of revolution, John.

*Ireton.* But you find it everywhere, ma'am. All along the country-side, in the markets, in the church porches—everywhere.

*Elizabeth.* Is the vine doing well this year, John ?

*Hampden.* It's the best year I remember.

*Elizabeth.* Ours, too.

*Bridget.* Were you there, Mr Ireton, when cousin John's case was tried ?

*Ireton.* Yes.

*Bridget.* It was splendid, wasn't it—although he lost, I mean ?

*Ireton.* It was the note of deliverance.

*Bridget.* I wish I could have been there, cousin John.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Will you give me my shawl, Henry Ireton ?

[*He does so.*]

There's Oliver coming. Now you can all be thunder.

*Bridget.* Now, grandmother, you know you don't think it's just that.

*Mrs Cromwell.* So you have hope for me yet, miss ?

*Bridget.* Grandmother.

[*Cromwell comes in. He is in plain country dress. His age is forty.*]

*Cromwell.* John—it's good to see you. You're an hour before reckoning.

[*Taking Hampden's hand.*

*Hampden.* Yes, Oliver. Is all well?

*Cromwell.* Not that—but our courage is well enough. You are very welcome, Henry (*taking his hand*). Was it good travelling?

*Ireton.* Not a bad mile on the journey.

*Bridget.* Father, Mr Ireton heard cousin John's case tried. Wasn't he lucky?

*Cromwell.* Whoever heard that heard history being made, John. It was a great example to set.

*Hampden.* One works from the spirit, Oliver.

*Cromwell.* That's what we must do. You've heard about this affair down here?

*Hampden.* The common? Yes.

*Cromwell.* There's to be no yielding about that.

*Hampden.* I'm glad of it, Oliver.

*Mrs Cromwell.* What will it all come to, John?

*Cromwell.* There are times, mother, when we may not count the cost.

*Mrs Cromwell.* You're very vexatious sometimes, Oliver.

*Cromwell.* But you know I'm right in this, mother.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Being right doesn't make you less vexatious.

*Elizabeth.* Have they finished in Long Close ?

Oliver

*Cromwell.* Yes. They will be here soon.

Cromwell

*Bridget.* They all come up from the field for prayers, Mr Ireton, at the day's end.

*Hampden.* Is your hay good, Oliver ?

*Cromwell.* I haven't much down this year. What there is, is good.

*Hampden.* We got the floods too late. But it has mended well enough.

*Bridget.* The dancers came for some money, father.

*Elizabeth.* Shall I give them something ?

*Cromwell.* To be sure.

*Elizabeth.* How much ?

*Cromwell.* Oh—a crown or two.

*Hampden.* Dancers ?

*Cromwell.* Aye, John. Don't you hold with them ?

*Hampden.* They're no offence perhaps—but I'm never quite sure.

*Cromwell.* Oh, but be sure, John. We must make no mistake about that. They are lovely, the dancers. I'm all for singing and dancing. The Lord is one to sing and dance, I'll be bound.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Now you talk sense, Oliver. Mr Herrick is very clear about that. So was David.

*Ireton.* Who is Mr Herrick, ma'am ?

*Mrs Cromwell.* He's a poet, young man. And he's for being quiet, and not bustling about everywhere. You ought to read him.

*Ireton.* Do you know Mr Herrick's work, Mr Hampden?

*Hampden.* I've nothing to say against that, though it's not very serious.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Don't be silly, Mr Hampden—if you'll excuse me for saying so. Mr Herrick is very serious indeed, only he isn't always telling us of it.

*Hampden.* Yes: perhaps you're right, ma'am. I prefer George Herbert.

*Bridget.* Yes, I like his book, too, cousin John.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Well, it's no bad judgment to stand for Mr Herbert. Only I won't have nonsense talked about Mr Herrick.

*Elizabeth.* Are you ready, Oliver? They are coming.

*Cromwell.* Yes. (*To Hampden and Ireton*) Friends, you are welcome to this house.

[*The labourers from the farm are gathering outside the window. The people in the room form towards them.*]

*Cromwell.* Brethren in God, at the end of another day's labour we are met to praise Him from whom are the means to labour and its rewards. As we go about these fields, He is with us. As you deal by

me, and I by you, His eye sees us. Nothing good  
befalls us but it is by His will, no affliction is ours  
but His loving mercy will hear us. The Lord God  
walks at our hand. He is here now in our midst.  
His desires are our freedom, His wrath our tyranny  
one over another. Be very merciful in all your  
ways, for mercy is His name. May His counsel be  
always with our little fellowship. If I should fail  
towards any man let him speak. May we be as  
brothers always, one to another. And may we  
serve Him to serve whom alone is wisdom. In  
Jesus Christ's name, Amen. "All people that on  
earth do dwell."  
[*They sing.*]

Oliver  
Cromwell

All people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice ;  
Him serve with fear, His praise forth tell,  
Come ye before Him, and rejoice.

The Lord, ye know, is God indeed ;  
Without our aid He did us make ;  
We are His flock, He doth us feed,  
And for His sheep He doth us take.

O enter then His gates with praise,  
Approach with joy His courts unto ;  
Praise, laud, and bless His name always,  
For it is seemly so do to.

[*As the men move away, one of them, Seth Tanner, comes forward.*]

*Seth.* As I came up from Long Close I stopped at the ale-house. Two fellows were there from the Earl of Bedford. Talking they were.

*Cromwell.* What had they to say ?

*Seth.* It seems they know you are going to stand out for the people to-morrow.

*Cromwell.* Well ?

*Seth.* Treason, they call it.

*Cromwell.* Treason.

*Seth.* Seeing that my lord of Bedford has the king's authority as it were.

*Cromwell.* Thank you, Seth.

*Seth.* They were coming here, they said. To warn you, and persuade you against it if it might be.

*Cromwell.* Thank you, Seth.

*Seth (to Hampden).* If I might be so bold, sir ?

*Hampden.* What, my friend ?

*Seth.* That was a brave thing to do, sir, that about the ship-money. We common folk know what it means. I'm sure we thank you with all our hearts.

*Hampden.* I don't know about brave, but I know it is good to be thanked like that.

*Seth.* Yes, sir. That's all. Good-even, sir ; good-even, mistress.

*[He is moving away as two of Bedford's* Oliver  
*agents appear at the window, followed by* Cromwell  
*the other labourers, who have returned*  
*with them.*

*First Agent.* Is this Mr Oliver Cromwell's ?

*Cromwell.* It is.

*Mrs Cromwell.* The door is along there, to the right.

*Cromwell.* It's no matter, mother. What do you want ?

*First Agent.* To see Mr Cromwell.

*Cromwell.* You are speaking to him.

*Second Agent.* May we come in ?

*Cromwell.* Why, yes.

*[They do so. The labourers gather round the window again. They follow the coming argument with close personal concern.]*

*Second Agent.* May we speak with you alone ?

*Cromwell.* These are all my friends. I have nothing to say that I would not have them hear.

*First Agent.* It is discretion for your sake.

*Cromwell.* I do not desire your interest. What have you to say ?

*Second Agent.* It is said that you will oppose the proclamation to-morrow.

*Cromwell.* Assuredly.

*Second Agent.* The Earl of Bedford and those with him have not drained these commons for nothing.

*Cromwell.* Well ?

*Second Agent.* They have earned the rights to be proclaimed to-morrow.

*Cromwell.* By whose will ?

*First Agent.* By the king's.

*Cromwell.* These rights of pasture belong to the people. It is within no man's powers to take them away.

*Second Agent.* The king decrees it.

*Cromwell.* I know not how that may be. I know that these rights are the people's, above any earl or king whatsoever. The king is to defend our rights, not to destroy them.

*First Agent.* This is plain treason.

*Cromwell.* It is plain sense.

*Second Agent.* What will you do ?

*Cromwell.* To-morrow you will proclaim these rights from the people to my lord of Bedford. To-morrow I shall tell the people that I alone, if needs be, will oppose it. I will fight it from court to court. I will make these rights my rights—as they are. These people of Ely shall speak through me. They shall pay me a groat a year for each head of cattle they graze, and they shall enjoy



every foot of the land as long as I have a word or a pound left for resistance.

Oliver  
Cromwell

*Second Agent.* You are very arrogant, Mr Cromwell. There are lessons to be learnt.

*Cromwell.* Ay, there are lessons. I do not speak to you, but to your master—to the king himself if it comes to that. You may tell him all that I have said. We folk of Ely will use our own commons, and let the Earl of Bedford keep within his own palings. There are lessons, say you. This is Mr John Hampden. Will you speak to him of lessons? Mr Hampden's ship-money will be a king's lesson, I tell you.

*Hampden.* You should tell your masters all that you see and hear. Do not flatter them. Let it be the truth. Say that men talk everywhere, more and more openly. Tell them that you heard John Hampden say that the king's Star Chamber was an abomination, that the king soiled his majesty in treating Mr Prynne and Mr Bastwick so. Say that you and your like are reviled by all honest men.

*Ireton.* And you can say that it is no fear of earls or kings that spared you the whipping you would deserve if you were better than shadows.

*Bridget.* Well said, Mr Ireton.

*[There is a demonstration of anger from the labourers, but Cromwell checks it.]*

*Cromwell.* No, friends, these men say but what they are sent to say.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Now, Henry Ireton, these gentlemen may be bears, but I won't have you make this room into a bear-pit.

*Cromwell (to the Agents).* I should not speak to you, but in the hope that you will report it to those that should know. I am a plain burgess of this city. I farm a few lands and am known to none. But I have a faith, that the people of this country are born to be, under God, a free people. That is the fundamental principle of this English life. If your masters, be they who they may, forget that, then, as you say, there will be lessons to be learnt. Here in Ely it is my part to see that my fellows do not lose their birthright. You shall not find us ignorant nor afraid. I would have no violence; let all be by persuasion and tolerance. But these just liberties must not be touched. Will you ask my lord of Bedford to reconsider this?

*Second Agent.* His lordship will reconsider nothing. The proclamation is to-morrow.

*Cromwell.* I have no more to say.

*First Agent.* Be you wary, Mr Cromwell. These arrogances have their penalties. The king's anger is not light.

*Cromwell.* You threaten idly. My word is one Oliver  
spoken throughout the land. You can say so. Cromwell

*Second Agent.* Mr Cromwell, we do not ——

*Cromwell.* My mind is fixed. I think I have made  
my intention clear. That is all. You may go.

*[There is again a movement against them as  
they go, followed by the labourers.]*

*Cromwell.* Seth.

*Seth.* Yes, sir.

*Cromwell.* Ask your father to stay, will you ?  
We shall want a song after that.

*Seth.* Yes, sir. *(He calls from the window.)*

Father. Master wants you to sing.

*[Amos Tanner comes back.]*

*Cromwell.* Thank you, Amos. Just a minute,  
will you ? When will supper be, wife ?

*Elizabeth.* In half an hour.

*Cromwell.* How would a turn at bowling be,  
John ?

*Hampden.* Done.

*Cromwell.* Henry, you too ?

*Ireton.* Yes ; and Mr Cromwell. . . .

*Cromwell.* Yes.

*Ireton.* I don't know how things are going. But  
I feel that great events are making, and that you  
and Mr Hampden here may have power to use men.  
If it should be so, I would be used. That is all.

*Cromwell.* John's the man. I'm likely enough to stay the rest of my days in Ely.

*Ireton.* I don't think so, sir.

*Cromwell.* No ? Well. A glass of sherry, John—or gin ?

*Hampden.* Sherry, Oliver.

[*Cromwell pours out the sherry.*]

*Cromwell.* Henry ?

*Ireton.* Thank you.

*Cromwell* (*giving glasses*). Amos ?

*Amos.* I'd liefer have a pot of ale, master, if might be.

*Cromwell.* Yes, yes. Bridget girl.

[*Bridget goes.*]

*Mrs Cromwell.* Oliver boy, you were quite right—all that you said to those men, I mean. I don't approve, mind you, but you were quite right.

*Cromwell.* Thank you, mother. I knew you would think so.

*Elizabeth.* I wonder what will come of it. You never know, once you begin like this.

*Cromwell.* You never know, wife.

*Hampden.* There are lessons to be learnt.

*Cromwell.* That's what they said.

[*Bridget returns with a foaming pot of ale, which she gives to Amos.*]

*Cromwell (drinking).* To freedom, John. That's Oliver  
good sherry. I respect not such ill reasoners as Cromwell  
would keep all wine out of the country lest men  
should be drunk. Now, Amos. Come along, John,  
my touch was good last night. I shall beat you.

*[He goes out on to the lawn beyond the window,  
with Hampden and Ireton. They are  
seen passing to and fro, playing bowls.]*

*Amos (singing).*

When I shall in the churchyard lie,  
Poor scholar though I be,  
The wheat, the barley, and the rye,  
Will better wear for me.

For truly have I ploughed and sown,  
And kept my acres clean,  
And written on my churchyard stone  
This character be seen,

“ His flocks, his barns, his gear he made  
His daily diligence,  
Nor counted all his earnings paid  
In pockets-full of pence.”

*[As he finishes, the bowlers stand listening at  
the window.]*

THE SCENE CLOSES

## SCENE II

*The Commons of England in session at St Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, on November 22nd, 1641. Cromwell, Hampden, Ireton among those sitting. We see the east end of the Chapel, with The Speaker.*

*It is past midnight, and the House is lighted with candles. A member is speaking.*

*The Member.* That the grievances set out in this Remonstrance now before you are just is clear. The matter has been debated by us these eight hours, and none has been able to deny the wrongs which are here set forth. It is not well with our state, and correction is needed. Mr Ireton has very clearly shown us how this is. But we must be wary. The king is the king, a necessary part, as it must seem to us, of the government of this country.

*[There are murmurs for and against this ;  
assent in the majority.]*

To pass this Remonstrance can be no other than to pass a vote of no confidence in that king. Consider this. Saying so much, how shall you deny to overthrow the crown if need be ? And who among you is willing to bear that burden ?

*[The murmurs grow to conflicting cries.]*

I beseech you let us not commit ourselves thus. Nor do not think I am weak in zeal. There are evil counsellors with the king, and they would destroy us. Our liberties must be looked to. But there should be moderation in this act. We should choose some other way. We must defend ourselves, but we must not challenge the king's authority so.

Oliver  
Cromwell

*[He sits down to a confusion of voices, and  
Hampden rises.]*

*Hampden.* My friend, I think, is deceived. The Remonstrance is not against the king. It is from the people of this country against a policy. We desire no judgment—all we ask is redress. If we assert ourselves as in this instrument, we but put the king in the way of just government. I think the king hardly knows the measure of his wrongs against us, and I say it who have suffered. (*A murmur of assent.*) To speak clearly as is here done will, I think, be to mend his mind towards us. This Remonstrance has been drawn with all care. Not only is its intent free of blame towards the king's majesty and person, but it can, I hope, be read by no fair-minded man in the way that my friend fears. If I thought that, I should consider more closely my support of it. But I have considered with all patience and it seems to me good.



*[He sits, and again there is a rattle of argument. Cromwell rises.]*

*Cromwell.* Sir, this is a day when every man must speak the truth that is in him, or be silent in shame, and for ever. Mr Hampden is my kinsman, as you know, one who has my best affection. His word has ever been a strength among us, and no man here but knows his valiance in the cause. His has been a long suffering, and his integrity but ripens. But I do not read this occasion as he does, nor, let me say, do I fear it as does our friend who spoke before. That gentleman pleads that this Remonstrance is a vote of want of confidence in the king, such as none of us would willingly pass. Mr Hampden replies that it is no such vote. I say to you that it is such a vote, and that I would pass it with all my heart. Sir, this country, the spirit of man in this country, has suffered grievances too great to be borne. By whom are they laid upon us? I say it is by the king. Is a man's estate secure to himself? Does not the king pass upon it levies for his own designs? You know that it is so. Is there not ship-money? Mr Hampden can tell you. Is not that the king's affair? Is there not a Star Chamber? Ask Mr Prynne and those others. These men disliked the king's church—a very dangerous church as it seems to me—and were

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bold to say so. And for that each was fined five thousand pounds and had his ears cut off, and is now in prison for life. And does not the Star Chamber belong to the king? Who among you can deny it? And this land is bruised, I tell you, by such infamies. There is no sureness in a man for his purse, or his body, or his conscience. The king—not the head of the state, mark you, expressing the people's will in one authority—but this man, Charles Rex, may use all these as he will. I aim not to overthrow the monarchy. I know its use and fitness in the realm as well as any. But this can endure no longer. The king is part of the state, but we have a king who has sought to put the state to his private use. The king should have his authority, but it is an authority subject to the laws of the people. This king denies it, and his judges flatter the heresy. You have but one question before you—there is in truth but one raised by this Remonstrance. Is England to be governed by the king or by elected representatives of the people? That is what we have now to decide, not for ourselves alone, but for our children in the generations to come. If the king will profit by a lesson, I with any man will be his loyal and loving subject. But at this moment a lesson must be given. Why else have you appointed my lord

Oliver  
Cromwell

of Essex from Parliament to take command of the armed forces of this country? Did you not fear that the king would use these also against you? You know you did. I say it again, this that is now to be put to you is a vote of want of confidence in the king. I would it were so more expressly.

*[He sits to an angry tumult. Hampden rises, and after a time secures order.]*

*Hampden.* Sir, this question could not be argued to an end if we sat here for a week. Already we have considered it more closely and longer, I think, than any that has ever been before this House. It is morning. Each man has spoken freely from his mind. I move that the question now be put.

*The Speaker.* The question is, whether this question now be put.

*[There are cries of "Yea" and "No."]*

*The Speaker.* I think the Yeas have it.

*[This is followed by silence in the House.]*

*The Speaker.* Then the question now before the House is whether this Declaration shall pass.

*[Again there are cries of "Yea" and "No," strongly emphatic on both sides.]*

*The Speaker.* I think the Yeas have it.

*[There are loud and repeated cries of "No."]*

*The Speaker.* The House will divide. Tellers

for the Yeas, Sir John Clotworthy, Mr Arthur Goodwyn. Tellers for the Noes, Sir Frederick Cornwallis and Mr Strangeways. The Yeas to go forth. Oliver Cromwell

*[The House divides, the Yeas, including Cromwell, Hampden, and Ireton, leaving the House, the Noes remaining seated. The tellers for the Noes, with their staffs, count their numbers in the House, while the tellers for the Yeas at the door count theirs as they re-enter. The pent-up excitement grows as the Yeas resume their seats and the telling draws to a close. The tellers move up to the Speaker and give in their figures.]*

*The Speaker.* The Noes, one hundred and forty-eight. The Yeas, one hundred and fifty-nine. The Yeas have it by eleven.

*[The announcement is received with a loud turmoil of cheering, during which Ireton rises.]*

*Ireton.* Sir, I move that this measure, as passed by this House, be printed and distributed throughout the land.

*[The House breaks out into a wild disturbance, Yea shouting against No, swords being drawn and members hustling each]*

*other. The Speaker and Hampden at length pacify them.*

*Hampden.* I beg you remember what business you are on. These are grave times, for stout wills, but temperate blood. I beg you. Gentlemen.

*The Speaker.* The question is, whether this Declaration shall be printed and distributed. (*Cries of "Yea" and "No."*) I think the Noes have it.

*[Again there is tumult, during which the Speaker leaves his chair and the House, and the session breaks up, the members leaving in passionate discussion. Cromwell, Hampden, and Ireton stand talking.]*

*Cromwell (to Hampden).* It is the beginning.

*Hampden.* It may mean terror in this land.

*Cromwell.* It may. But the country must be delivered. I had thought to live in peace among my Ely acres. I sought none of this. But we must serve. If this Remonstrance had been rejected I would have sold all I have and have never seen England more. And I know there are many other honest men of this same resolution.

*Ireton.* The issue is set. We may have to spend all that we have.

*Cromwell.* Our goods, our peace, our lives.

*Hampden.* We must be diligent among the people.

*Cromwell.* It is the Lord's will.

Ireton. I can speak for many in Nottinghamshire. Oliver Cromwell

Cromwell. They will be needed.

Hampden. I can spend a thousand pounds on arms.

Cromwell. Arms. Yes. If it must be. But God may spare us.

*[There is a sound of argument outside, and Bridget Cromwell, persuading an officer of the House to let her enter, comes in with Amos Tanner. They are both from a long journey.]*

Bridget (greeting her father and the others). I went to your lodging and learnt that you were still here.

Cromwell. But what is it, daughter ?

Bridget. Amos here—we had to come.

Cromwell. Well ?

Amos. My boy—there, I can't tell.

Bridget. Seth—you know he came to London last year.

Cromwell. Yes.

Bridget. It seems he was in a tavern here one evening, and they were talking about ship-money. Seth said it was a bad thing, and he spoke of our cousin Hampden.

Amos. He remembered Mr Hampden when he

was at Ely, sir. He always took a great opinion of Mr Hampden, Seth did.

*Bridget.* He said cousin John was a great patriot because he wouldn't pay. The king's spies were there. Seth was taken. He got a message sent down to Amos. It was to be a Star Chamber matter.

*Amos.* There wasn't a better lad in the shire, sir.  
*Cromwell.* What has been done ?

*Bridget.* We don't know. I brought Amos up at once to find you. I wanted to come alone, but he wouldn't let me.

*Amos.* I couldn't stay, sir. They'll not have hurt him, surely ?

*Bridget.* What will they do ? Is it too late ? Can't it be stopped ?

*Cromwell.* Bassett. *[The officer comes.]*

*Bassett.* Yes, sir.

*Cromwell.* Have you heard any Star Chamber news these last days ?

*Bassett.* Nothing out of the way, sir. A few croppings and brandings.

*Cromwell.* Any names ?

*Bassett.* Jollyboy was one. That's an anyhow name for a man now, isn't it ? Lupton there was, too. He was cropped both ears—said a bishop was a man. That was blasphemous. And a fellow

about ship-money. That was savage. Tanner his name was. Oliver  
Cromwell

*Amos.* Yes — but not Seth — it wasn't Seth Tanner ?

*Bassett.* Tanner was all I heard.

*Amos.* It wouldn't be Seth.

*Bridget.* What did they do to him ?

*Bassett.* It's not proper hearing for your sort. But they let him go.

*Cromwell.* What was it ? The girl has heart enough.

*Bassett.* Both thumbs, both ears, the tongue, and a T on the forehead.

*Amos.* It wasn't Seth, sir. It couldn't be Seth — not like that. He was the beauty of the four parishes.

*Bassett (to Cromwell).* Was he something to do with you, sir ?

*Cromwell.* There is a boy, Seth Tanner, we have a care for.

*Bassett.* Because I made bold to take him in. He was dazed as it were—didn't seem to know where to go.

*Cromwell.* It was a good man's doing. Where is he ?

*Bassett.* I live under the walls here, as you might say.

*Cromwell.* Could we see him ?

*Bassett.* Nay—it's no place to take you to. But I'll fetch him if you will. He doesn't sleep.

*Cromwell.* Do, then. [*Bassett goes.*]

*Amos.* It's not my Seth, is it, sir ? Not his tongue—and a bloody T. They would know how he could sing, and he looked like Gabriel in the books.

*Hampden.* Shall we go, Oliver ?

*Cromwell.* No. Let us all see it out.

*Bridget.* Father, it's horrible. They don't do things like that, do they ?

*Amos.* Dumb—and a bloody T—and the thumbs. It's some other poor lad.

[*Bassett returns, with him a figure, the hands and ears bound up in rough thick bandages, and on his forehead a burning red T. He looks at them, with reason hardly awake.*]

*Amos* (*going to him*). Seth—Seth, boy.

[*Seth moves his lips, but makes no sound. They look at him in horror.*]

*Bridget.* Father—father.

*Cromwell.* There—no—no. (*To Bassett*) Take him, good fellow. Care for him as you can. Get a surgeon for him. Here's money. No, no, old man.

[*Bassett goes with Seth.*]

*Amos.* A bloody T. And dumb. God blast the king.



*Cromwell.* Take him to our lodging, daughter. Oliver  
Cromwell  
Go with them, Ireton. I'll follow.

*[Bridget, Amos, and Ireton go.]*

*Cromwell.* John, you are my best-beloved friend.

*Hampden.* I praise myself in that more than in most.

*Cromwell.* I call you to witness. That is a symbol. Before God, I will not rest until all that it stands for in this unhappy England is less than the dust. Amen.

*Hampden.* Amen.

*[A linkman is heard calling in the street.]*

*Cromwell and Hampden go out.*

THE SCENE CLOSES

### SCENE III

*Cromwell's house at Ely. A year later, 1642. It is afternoon in winter. Mrs Cromwell is sitting by the fire, reading. She looks a little more her eighty odd years than she did in the first scene. After a few moments Bridget comes in. She is opening a letter.*

*Bridget.* Grandmother, the mayor has come. He says that he will wait for father. I think that father

should be here almost at once. He has written. Shall I read it to you ?

*Mrs Cromwell.* Yes, child.

*[Bridget sits by the fire, and reads.]*

*Bridget.*

MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

I am lately arrived in London, from Edgehill in the county of Warwickshire, where for the first time our men met the king's army in set dispute. It was late on the Sabbath afternoon, so that, as we lay for the attack, the sound of church bells came to us from three or four places. The king had the better ground, also they exceeded us in numbers, both horse and foot, and in cannon. It is hard to say which way the battle went, the advantage at one time being here, at another there. Their horsemen behaved very well, being commanded by Prince Rupert, a soldier of great courage in the field. Your cousin Hampden managed a regiment with much honour, and twice or thrice delivered our cause. We were engaged until night stayed us. Some four thousand were slain, their loss, I hear, being the greater. Of the sixty in my own troop eighteen fell. We had commendation from the general, and indeed I think we did not fail in resolution. But this matter will not be

accomplished save we build as it were again from the foundation. This is God's service, and all must be given. To which end I am now coming home, to call out all such men as have the love of England in their hearts, and fear God. I shall labour with them. It seems to me that I shall be called to great trust in this, and I will set such example as I can. Expect me as soon as you receive this, for indeed I leave London as soon almost as my letter. Your mother I saw here with her nephew. She loves you as I do. Henry Ireton comes with me—he served very stoutly at Edgehill, and hath a gunshot in the arm. None is like to serve these times better than he. Give my loving duty to your grandmother, which I shall at once deliver myself. God bless you.

Oliver  
Cromwell

Your affectionate

FATHER.

*Mrs Cromwell.* You are born into a great story, child. I am old.

*Bridget.* It's wonderful. To stand like that.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Not wonder only, girl. There are griefs.

*Bridget.* They are wonderful too, I think.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Youth, you are dear. With an

old woman, it's all reckoning. One sees the follies then of this man and that.

*Bridget.* It had to come, grandmother. The king was taking all.

*Mrs Cromwell.* It had to come. Men were no wiser than that. To make this of the land. One Cain, as your father says.

*Bridget.* It's as though life were different, suddenly. Do you feel it, grandmother?

*Mrs Cromwell.* I know. There are times when wrath comes, and beauty is forgotten. But it must be.

*Bridget (from the letter).* "This is God's service, and all must be given."

*Mrs Cromwell.* Yes. Even that.

*Bridget.* But you do think father is right?

*Mrs Cromwell.* Yes, child. He could do no other. That's his tribute to necessity. We all pay it. He will pay it greatly. We may be sure of that.

*[Horses are heard outside.]*

Here they are.

*[Bridget goes out to meet Cromwell and Ireton, with whom she returns in a moment. Ireton's right arm is in a sling. Mrs Cromwell has put her book aside, and is standing. She embraces Oliver.]*

*Cromwell.* Well, mother. Almost before our own tidings, eh ? Oliver  
Cromwell

*Mrs Cromwell.* Bless you, son. How d'ye do, Henry Ireton ? (*shaking hands with him*). Is it Colonel Ireton yet ?

*Ireton.* No, ma'am.

*Cromwell.* Soon, mother. He is marked.

*Bridget.* Is the arm —

*Ireton.* No, nothing.

*Cromwell.* The mayor has not come yet ?

*Bridget.* Yes—he is waiting for you.

*Cromwell.* Will you bring him here ? We must work at once. [*She goes out.*]

*Cromwell.* Elizabeth sends her devotion to you, mother.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Thank her, truly. Well, boy, it has begun.

*Cromwell.* We must dispute it to the end now.

*Mrs Cromwell.* May England prosper by you.

*Cromwell.* With God's help, amen.

[*Bridget returns with the Mayor of Ely.*]

*Cromwell.* Welcome, Mr Mayor.

*The Mayor.* Your good day, Captain Cromwell.  
(*To Mrs Cromwell*) Ma'am. (*To Ireton*) Sir.

*Cromwell.* Will you sit ?

[*They all sit, Mrs Cromwell, Bridget, and*

*Ireton by the fire. Cromwell and The Mayor at the table.*

*The Mayor.* At Edgehill in Warwickshire, I hear ?  
*Cromwell.* Yes.

*The Mayor.* The issue was left uncertain, it is said ?

*Cromwell.* Of that battle, yes. But I think the issue was there decided, some few of us there learning what must now be done. Those few held firmly at Edgehill, keeping us as far from defeat as we were, though that was little enough. For our troops are most of them old decayed serving-men, and tapsters, and such kind of fellows ; and their troops are gentlemen's sons, younger sons and persons of quality. Do you think that the spirits of such base mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen that have honour and courage and resolution in them ?

*The Mayor.* What, then, is to be done ?

*Cromwell.* We must get men of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go, or we shall be beaten still. We must raise such men as have the fear of God before them, such men as make some conscience of what they do. We must do this, Mr Mayor. I never thought to use a sword, but now all must be given that it may be used well.

*The Mayor.* You have but to command me.

Oliver  
Cromwell

*Cromwell.* I would have you send a summons to all the people of this town and country-side. Bid them meet two days hence in the market-place at noon. I will tell them of all these things. I will show them how the heart of England is threatened. We must give, we must be diligent in service, we must labour. An army is to be made—we must make it. We have no help but our own hands—by them alone we must save this country. Will you send out this summons?

*The Mayor (rising).* It shall be done, this hour. My service to you. [*He bows to all and goes.*]

*Cromwell.* Nothing is to be spared, the cause must have all. We must be frugal, mother. Daughter, help as you can.

*Bridget.* I will indeed, father.

*Mrs Cromwell.* You commit yourself, boy, beyond turning back in all this.

*Cromwell.* It must be so. The choice has been made, and is past.

*Mrs Cromwell.* The Lord prosper you. But I am an old woman. Age can but have misgivings.

*Cromwell.* We must have none, mother. Every yeoman, all the workers in the land, all courtesy and brave reason look to us. No king may be against us. He may lead us, but he may not be

against us. Have no misgivings, mother. Faith everywhere, that is our shield.

*Mrs Cromwell (rising).* I will be no hindrance, son.

*Cromwell.* You are my zeal. I grew to it in you.

*Mrs Cromwell.* I must see. [*She goes out.*]

*Cromwell.* How is Seth, Bridget ?

*Bridget.* He mends daily. Amos tends him like a mother.

*Cromwell.* I must see them. Send to Mistress Hall and Robert. Let us have music this evening. Anthony, too. Let him bring his flute. There's good music here, Henry. [*He goes.*]

*Bridget.* Robert Hall sings beautifully.

*Ireton.* Will you sing, too ?

*Bridget.* I expect so.

*Ireton.* I once tried to learn the flute. It was no good. I couldn't do it unless I watched my fingers.

*Bridget.* Was it very terrible at Edgehill ?

*Ireton.* Yes.

*Bridget.* Were we really beaten ?

*Ireton.* No. A few saved us from that.

*Bridget.* Were you one ?

*Ireton.* Your father was chief among them.

*Bridget.* Was he ?

*Ireton.* He will lead armies. Every man will



follow him. He never faltered, and there was no misjudgment, ever.

Oliver  
Cromwell

*Bridget.* Did you keep the horses you had when you left London ?

*Ireton.* Yes, both of us.

*Bridget.* I was glad to see you then.

*Ireton.* You know what is coming ?

*Bridget.* Yes. I see it.

*Ireton.* We shall live with danger now. It may take years. Many of us will not see the end. We are no longer our own.

*Bridget.* These are the best crusades.

*Ireton.* To be called, thus. To be led by such a one. I know your father will direct it—he must be the man. He is only a captain to-night, but in a month or two you will see. And we shall be a mighty following. I see them forming, terrible hosts. We must give all, truly. I shall give all I think. It is little enough. *Bridget.*

*Bridget.* Yes.

*Ireton.* You promised. I might speak again, you said.

*Bridget.* Yes.

*Ireton.* Will you wed a man so dedicated ?

*Bridget.* The more for that. Yes, Henry.

*Ireton (as they embrace).* May we tell your father now ?

*Bridget.* Yes—if I can but help you to serve.

*Ireton.* You shape my service. In you shall all the figures of my service dwell. Will he take this kindly ?

*Bridget.* Surely. He loves you, he has said it often. *[Cromwell returns.]*

*Bridget.* Father, Henry Ireton has to speak to you.

*Cromwell.* Eh ?

*Ireton.* Yes. Mr Cromwell.

*Cromwell.* Quite so. Mr Cromwell. That's very interesting now, isn't it ?

*Ireton.* By your leave I would marry Bridget.

*Cromwell.* I dare say. You would be a very foolish young man else. And what of Bridget's leave ?

*Bridget.* He has that.

*Cromwell.* I should think so, too. Well ?

*Ireton.* You consent ?

*Cromwell.* I could do nothing more gladly. You have chosen well, both of you. I rejoice for you. But you must wait until this business we have in hand is gathered up a little.

*Bridget.* Yes, father. It is better so.

*Cromwell.* Let your mother know of the betrothal. I will write as well.

*Bridget.* To-night.

*Cromwell.* Seth asked to see you, Henry.

*Ireton.* Shall we go ?

*Bridget.* Yes.

[*Bridget and Ireton go.*

Oliver  
Cromwell

[*Cromwell lights a candle, gets paper and pen, and sits at the table writing. After a few moments Mrs Cromwell comes in. She carries a large bunch of keys. Cromwell looks up, and continues writing. She unlocks a large wooden chest, and takes some parchment deeds from it. Then she comes to Cromwell at the table.*

*Mrs Cromwell.* Oliver.

*Cromwell.* Yes, mother.

*Mrs Cromwell.* These are my five Ely houses, and the Huntingdon farmlands. Use them.

*Cromwell.* But it's all you have.

*Mrs Cromwell.* My needs are few, and I have not many days.

*Cromwell (rising).* I will use them, mother, worthily, with God's help. [*He kisses her.*

*Mrs Cromwell.* Bless you, my son. Bless you always. And may the mercy of God be upon England.

*Cromwell.* Upon England.

[*He places the deeds on the table before him, and resumes his writing. Mrs Cromwell closes the chest, and sits at a spinet, playing.*

*Mrs Cromwell.* Mr Lawes makes beautiful music, Oliver.

*Cromwell.* Yes, mother.

*[She plays again for a few moments. Then Bridget and Ireton return.]*

*Bridget.* Amos and Seth want to speak to you, father. The men are coming.

*Cromwell.* Yes. *[She beckons them in.]*

*Cromwell.* Bridget has news for you, mother.

*[Bridget and Ireton go to Mrs Cromwell.]*

*Amos.* I meant to speak when you were down there, sir. But I'm a bit slow. There's two things, so to say.

*Cromwell.* Yes, Amos.

*Amos.* There's to be great wars and spending, I know.

*Cromwell.* Yes, Amos.

*Amos.* I should like to give the little I've saved. You'll spend it well, sir, I know. It's a matter of two pound. It's not a deal, but it might help by way of an example, as it might be.

*[He offers a small bag of money.]*

*Cromwell.* In such measure it shall be taken from all who will give. That is true in spirit, Amos. It shall be used. *[He places it with the deeds.]*

*Amos.* And then if I might speak for Seth.

*Cromwell.* Yes, what is it ?

*Amos.* He's dumb, sir, it's true, but you'll find no better heart nor wits. And he has a fair lot of book-learning now as well, and has come to handle a pen for all his poor hands were treated so. He would be your servant, sir, in the wars.

*Cromwell.* It's a good offer. Very well, Seth, we'll serve together.

*[Seth acknowledges this, gravely pleased.  
There are voices outside.]*

*Bridget.* They are coming, father. Are you ready ?

*Cromwell.* Yes.

*[Bridget opens the door on to the stone hall,  
and the labourers stand at the door and  
beyond.]*

*Cromwell (rising).* My friends, the tyranny that has worked among us so grievously and long now strikes at our all. We must betake ourselves to defence, or this will be but a rotten realm, fair for no man to live in henceforth. Against us are arrayed the ranks of privilege. They are mighty, well used in arms, fearless, and not easily to be turned aside. But we go to battle in the name of God. Let every man consider it. Each one of you is here and now called to service in that name, that hereafter in England a man may call his hearth his own. In humble courage let us go

forward, nourishing our strength, sure always in our cause. May God bless us, and teach us the true valiance, and may He spend us according to His will. Amen. The Lord is my shepherd ; I shall not want.

*[Together they speak, Oliver leading them.]*

The Lord is my shepherd ; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures ;  
He leadeth me beside the still water.

He restoreth my soul ; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for Thou art with me. . . .

*[The outside bell rings loudly. Cromwell stops in mid-speech, and pauses a moment.]*

Cromwell. Who is that, to-night ?

*[He goes to the window and looks out through the curtains. There is a movement among the labourers at the hall door.]*

Cromwell. It's John, surely, John Hampden. But why here ? He was in London.

*[Hampden comes through the knot of people. He is breathless, straight from the road.]*

Cromwell. John.

Hampden. Oliver. Are you alone—your own people only, I mean ?

Cromwell. Yes—why ?

Oliver  
Cromwell

Hampden. Good—I feared I might be too late.  
Good-evening, ma'am (*to Mrs Cromwell*). Bridget,  
my girl. Good-evening, Henry. [*He greets them.*]

Cromwell. But what is it, John ? Why too late ?

Hampden. I will tell you. Could I have some  
food—anything ?

Bridget. Yes, cousin John.

[*She goes out. Cromwell dismisses the  
labourers. Hampden sits at the table,  
the women by the fire, Ireton standing by  
them. Cromwell stands by Hampden.*]

Hampden. Two nights ago one of my men—you  
know, Fotherington, the fellow you saved at Edge-  
hill—was in a tavern at Cheapside. He overheard  
two gentlemen talking.

Cromwell. Yes ?

Hampden. One of them was about to set out for  
Ely. He belonged to Rupert's Horse.

Cromwell. For Ely ?

Hampden. Yes. Fotherington could not follow  
exactly, but he heard "Ely," and "Cromwell  
himself," and then, "the king's own commands"  
and something about an offer, and last of all "the  
most dangerous man against us. Dispose of him  
one way or another."

[*Bridget brings a tray of food and drink,*

*places it before Hampden, and joins the others by the fire.*

*Cromwell.* And then ?

*Hampden.* Fotherington came straight to me. I decided to come to you. I started that night, and made Edmonton. Our friend was there. I kept my room, which was lucky, for in the morning I saw him start—it was the gentleman who called on you that day from the Earl of Bedford. Last night I followed him to the inn at Royston. His room was next to mine. I did a little spying. He bristles with devices. He has a mail shirt which must be extremely uncomfortable, he conceals an armoury, and he has something in a ring—one of those genial Italian fancies.

*Cromwell.* Ah—quite a furious goblin, eh ?

*Hampden.* But not out of a legend—very near, on the Huntingdon road. And he means to persuade you—Oliver, or kill you.

*Cromwell.* It's a godless business.

*Hampden.* Unclean all through.

*Cromwell.* And yet, we must keep it clean. Where is he ?

*Hampden.* I was off two hours before him this morning. But I was held up for horses twice. It was a question who would get here first.

*Ireton.* What could they mean about an offer ?



*Hampden.* Every man can be bought, they think. *Oliver Cromwell.* Thank you for your care, John. I *Cromwell* want to live, till we have finished.

*[The bell rings again. All attention goes to the door ; and after a moment Amos comes in.]*

*Amos.* I saw him at the gate. I shouldn't let him come in, master. It's that same fellow that was here before. And he was there when Seth ——

*Cromwell.* All right, Amos—but send him in.

*[Amos, a dangerous old man now, shows in the cavalier.]*

*Cromwell.* Sir.

*The Cavalier.* Mr Cromwell.

*Cromwell.* By your leave, Captain in the Parliamentary Forces of this country.

*The Cavalier.* A rank not recognised by the king whose subjects we are, Mr Cromwell.

*Cromwell.* No. But His Majesty may be persuaded yet. Edgehill was a suggestion.

*The Cavalier.* His Majesty will, I hope, rather persuade.

*Cromwell.* But your visit ——

*The Cavalier.* May I explain ?

*Cromwell.* You may do nothing more suitably.

*The Cavalier.* But to you alone ?

*Cromwell.* Your name, if you please ?

*The Cavalier.* Colonel Stanley.

*Cromwell.* Yes, Mr Stanley, you have a passion for secrecy. I have not, as I told you once before in this room. What is it? Be seated.

*Stanley (sitting at the table).* I have the honour to bring a message to you from the king.

*Cromwell.* My friends, I am sure, are all eagerness with me.

*Stanley.* As you will. This treason, Mr Cromwell, will be crushed within a month—mercilessly.

*Cromwell.* This is no treason, and I am not Mr Cromwell, and it is tyranny that will be crushed—mercilessly.

*Stanley.* You are misled. The power against you is far beyond your reckoning. But His Majesty is sensible of merit. He would save it from its own folly.

*Cromwell.* You mean you are sent to buy me?

*Stanley.* That is to speak crudely.

*Cromwell.* You are behaving crudely. What price do you propose?

*Stanley.* His Majesty thinks well of you—of some three or four who are misguided with you—this gentleman, Mr Hampden if I mistake not, among them. Retribution is certain—it will be severe. His Majesty would spare you that, he covets your service for the State.

*Cromwell.* You may tell His Majesty that we are serving the State that he has betrayed. Oliver  
Cromwell

*Hampden.* Do you think we are children, to be hoodwinked by a courtier's word? The king fears us, that is all, he fears the conscience that has called us.

*Stanley.* The king fears nothing but harm to England.

*Hampden.* Why do you come to Ely to speak these nothings to us? Harm to England, you say. There was a time for solicitude—it is gone.

*Cromwell.* Listen to me. You saw that old man who brought you in. He has a son, a straight, clean boy, the flower of England's youth. When Mr Hampden here stood against your king's abuses—against his thefts—no, thefts I tell you—that boy was one with all the generous and suffering spirit of the land. He cried out—"well done," and the king heard. Fetch Seth, Bridget. [*Bridget goes out.*]

*Stanley.* Government is government. Loose tongues must be checked.

*Cromwell.* And so you cut them out. I know.

[*Bridget returns with Seth, Amos behind them.*]

*Cromwell.* That is the boy. Look at him. You have seen him before.

*Stanley.* I don't remember.

*Cromwell.* But we remember. He will never

cry "well done" again. Look at his hands, Colonel Stanley. (*He holds Seth's hands towards him.*) That's how your king loves England.

*Stanley.* Yes, yes—but the law has unhappy duties —

*Cromwell.* The law! Go back to London, man.

*Amos.* And listen, master. The common folk of England will suffer, and give, and die—but they will have no more of kings like that. And they know that it is Captain Cromwell and his like who are going to lead them out of darkness.

*Ireton.* You said the power against us was beyond our reckoning. Tell your king that an army is going into the field such as men have never seen. Sometimes we shall be silent, and sometimes we shall sing, and it will be a song of worship.

*Stanley.* Fanaticism is no policy —

*Hampden.* We are fanatics in good time. Like lovers. The moment is chosen.

*Cromwell.* Do you still hope to persuade?

*Stanley.* You taxed me with seeking privacy. It is natural, in a king's envoy. There are other matters—I should fail in my duty if I spoke them to any but you. A few moments would serve.

*Hampden.* Oliver —

*Cromwell.* It's all right, John. Colonel Stanley, you are not only sinister, you are foolish too. You

come here to corrupt us—that was an idle errand, Oliver Cromwell you must have known it. When you were talking in Cheapside the other night, you were not alone. As you travelled down from London, Mr Hampden travelled with you. And now you want to see me privately. Why? “Dispose of him, one way or another.” Oh, we know all about it. You come here tricked out with knives and venoms like a mountebank. Shirts of mail, eh, Colonel Stanley? A very wise precaution—I wear one myself. (*He shows it at his throat.*) But do you think that this is a brawl for children? Have me caught by your bullies at a corner—and you will still have the conscience of a people and the freedom that is in man’s blood and the Book of God against you. Go back to your king and tell him that. (*He goes to the door.*) You have deserved smaller courtesy, but we give you leave to go.

*Stanley (at the door).* We may meet again, Mr Cromwell.

*Cromwell.* I should be sorry if it were so.

[*Stanley goes. Cromwell comes down to the table.*]

*Cromwell.* John, it has been shown to us. They are not large enough.

THE SCENE CLOSES

#### SCENE IV

*After dawn on July 14th, 1645, the day of Naseby.*

*General Fairfax, with Ireton—now Colonel—and two other officers, is holding a council of war in his tent. He is working to a map. During the proceedings sentries pass to and fro.*

*Fairfax.* Between Mill Hill, and Sulby Hall, there. Broad Moor—yes. You measure their numbers at ten thousand, Staines ?

*Staines.* Not more than ten, nor less than eight.

*Fairfax.* Four thousand or so of them horse ?

*Staines.* It is thought so.

*Fairfax.* Yes, yes. We are eleven thousand, eh, Pemberton ?

*Pemberton.* Eleven thousand and perhaps three hundred.

*Fairfax.* Naseby will be three-quarters—no, half a mile behind us.

*Ireton.* The right of the field is boggy, and pitted by rabbits. The action is like to move to the left.

*Fairfax.* Yes. There's a high hedge above there below Sulby. It would be useful to us then.

*Staines.* It has been marked, and dug almost to the water-side.

*Fairfax.* Good. Skippon and myself with the

infantry there and there. Then the cavalry—you Oliver  
have one wing, Ireton, or you must command all, Cromwell  
since General Cromwell is not come.

*Pemberton.* Is there any word of him ?

*Fairfax.* None.

*Staines.* They do not consider us at Westminster.

*Ireton.* It is disastrous of them to hesitate so.  
They do not understand.

*Fairfax.* No. I have told them that to-day is  
to be made the fiercest trial of all, but they do  
not listen.

*Pemberton.* Where is General Cromwell ?

*Fairfax.* None knows. These months he has  
been up and down the land, exhorting, stirring up  
opinion, watching the discipline of our new armies,  
lending his personal authority in bringing men's  
minds to the cause. But to-day we need him here.  
He should have been sent. We need him.

*Ireton.* Urgently. Charles and Rupert are stak-  
ing all on this.

*Staines.* They were never in better tune. It is  
as though every man were picked.

*Fairfax.* I said this to Westminster.

*Ireton.* We carry too many callow soldiers against  
them. Example will be everything. General  
Cromwell and his chosen troops have that, and  
experience, none like them.



*Pemberton.* Does the General himself know of our necessity, do you think, sir ?

*Fairfax.* There is no tracing him. He almost certainly does not know, or he would have insisted. There are rumours of him from the eastern counties, of some activities with his men, but no more.

*Ireton.* And the hope of England here in grave peril. Westminster is disgraceful.

*Staines.* Your appeal was plain, sir—weighty enough ?

*Fairfax* (*taking a paper from the table*). You may hear for yourself. (*Reading the end of a letter copy.*) “The general esteem and affection which he hath with the officers and soldiers of this whole army, his own personal worth and ability for employment, his great care, diligence, courage and faithfulness in the services you have already employed him in, with the constant presence and blessing of God that have accompanied him, make us look upon it as the duty we owe to you and the public, to make it our suit.”

*Pemberton.* It is shameful of them.

*Ireton.* It is. But that hope is gone. Do I take the left, sir ?

*Fairfax.* You must choose. The horse entirely are your command now.

*Ireton.* Whalley on the right, and you, Pemberton.



*Fairfax.* What's the hour ?

Oliver  
Cromwell

*Staines.* Six o'clock, sir.

*Fairfax.* They have had three hours. Let the army sleep till ten if it may be.

*Staines.* Yes, sir.

*Ireton.* Are you satisfied about those footmen on the left, sir ?

*Fairfax.* No, not satisfied. But we cannot better it.

*Pemberton.* Rupert is almost certain to see the weakness there.

*Fairfax.* Yes, but there it is. Skippon must cover it as he can. We have spoken of it very exactly.

*Ireton.* If either wing of our horse breaks, it means certain disaster there, even though Skippon could hold in the centre.

*Fairfax.* That's Cromwell again. And all to satisfy the pride of a few useless members that his self-denying ordinance keeps out of command.

*Staines.* Do you think it's that, sir ?

*Fairfax.* What else ? They are more jealous that he should come to no more honour than that we should succeed. And after all that has been given.

*Ireton.* The blood.

*Pemberton.* It is abominable.

*Fairfax.* But there—we must not distress ourselves. We have our own loyalty. Keep in touch with Skippon, Staines. If you can push their right foot up towards Sibbertoft there, spare nothing in the doing. Have you all slept, gentlemen?

*Ireton and the Others.* Yes, sir.

*Fairfax.* Since we lack General Cromwell, more depends on you, Ireton, than on any man, perhaps. You will not be wanting, I know.

*Ireton.* In endeavour at least—and we can die.

[*A Scout comes in.*

*Fairfax.* Yes?

*The Scout.* Something moves across from the east, sir. It is very faint. It may be haze, or it may be dust.

*Fairfax.* Watch. Come again at once.

[*The Scout goes. Fairfax and the others go to the tent opening and look out.*

*Fairfax.* Yes—there. It is moving, isn't it?

*Ireton.* I think not.

*Staines.* Surely.

*Pemberton.* Could it be?

*Fairfax.* No. We should have heard.

*Ireton.* And yet it seems to be moving.

*Fairfax.* Gentlemen, we must keep counsel with ourselves. This is to waste. Nerves must be unclouded to-day.

[*He returns to his seat, the others with* Oliver  
*him.* Cromwell

*Fairfax.* Finally, if we on the right have to fall back on Mill Hill, bring your horse down on to the Kilmarsh road, Pemberton, if it be any way possible.

*Pemberton.* Yes—there's a ford there, at the fork if we are up stream.

*Ireton.* I'll speak to Whalley, too.

*Fairfax.* If at last there should be a general retreat, it is to the west of Naseby, remember.

*Ireton.* Yes. To the west. That there should be that even in the mind.

*Fairfax.* In that case, the baggage is my concern.  
[*Outside is heard a low murmur of excitement.*]

*Fairfax.* Staines, will you tell Conway that five hundred of his best men must dispute the Naseby road to the last. And let Mitchell command under him.

*Staines.* Yes, sir. [The noise outside grows.

*Pemberton.* What is it ?

*Fairfax.* See.

[*Pemberton goes to the tent opening and looks out.*]

*Pemberton.* Our men are watching something. It is <sup>it</sup> something moving. Horsemen—it must be.

[*The excitement grows and grows. Ireton joins Pemberton.*]

*Ireton.* There is something.

*Fairfax.* Gentlemen, let us promise ourselves nothing.

[*Ireton and Pemberton move into the tent at Fairfax's word. As they do so the voices outside break out into a great shout, "Iron-sides—Ironsides—Ironsides is coming to lead us."* The Scout comes in, glowing.

*Fairfax* (rising). Yes ?

*The Scout.* General Cromwell is riding into the field with his Ironsides, sir, some six hundred strong.

*Fairfax.* Thank God.

[*Cromwell comes into the tent, fully armed, hot and dusty from the road. The shouting dies away, but outside there is a sound as of new life until the end of the scene. Seth, Oliver's servant, stands at the tent opening.*

*Fairfax.* You are welcome, none can say how much.

*Cromwell.* A near thing, sir. I only heard from Westminster yesterday at noon.

*Fairfax.* They told us nothing.

*Cromwell.* There are many poor creatures at Westminster, sir. Many of them I doubt not would have willingly had me kept uninformed of

this. But we are in time, and that's all. Henry. Oliver  
Cromwell  
Good-morning, gentlemen. How goes it ?

*Fairfax* (taking his seat, *Cromwell* and the others also at the table). The battle is set. Our foot there, Skippon and myself. Colonel Ireton and Whalley are with the horse. They are at your service.

*Cromwell* (at the map). Rupert will be there. Langdale, if I mistake not, will be there. That road—is it good ?

*Pemberton*. Poor below Mill Hill, sir.

*Cromwell*. Then that is the point ; it may be decisive there. You take the left, Henry.

*Ireton*. Yes, sir.

*Cromwell*. Let Whalley be on my left here—give him fifteen hundred. I have six hundred. I'll take the right with them myself. Are you on the left, sir ?

*Fairfax*. Yes, and the second line.

*Cromwell*. Good—can I have two of the best regiments down here behind me ?

*Fairfax*. Yes. Staines, let Spilsby see to that.

*Cromwell*. Spilsby is good.

*Staines*. If I might say it, would you choose him for that, sir ? It is a great responsibility, and he has been indiscreet. I thought not to use him to-day.

*Cromwell*. Indiscreet ?

*Staines.* In his utterances, sir. His belief is in some question.

*Cromwell.* Surely you are not well advised to turn off one so faithful to the cause, and so able to serve you as this man is. He is indiscreet, you say. It may be so in some things, we all have human infirmities. Sir, the State, in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions. If men be willing faithfully to serve, that satisfies. Let it be Spilsby.

*Staines.* Yes, sir.

*Cromwell.* Is the army well rested, sir ?

*Fairfax.* They are resting now. Till ten o'clock. We moved up at three.

*Cromwell.* Three hours for my men. It is enough. The order to advance at eleven ?

*Fairfax.* At eleven.

*Cromwell.* Is the word for the day chosen ?

*Fairfax.* Not yet.

*Cromwell.* Let it be "God our strength." Gentlemen.

*[They all rise, and, bareheaded, together they repeat "God our strength."]*

THE SCENE CLOSES

SCENE V

Oliver  
Cromwell

*The same tent. Night—with torches and candles. An Aide stands at the tent opening. The sentries pass to and fro. It is after the action. Ireton, severely wounded, is on a couch, surgeons attending him. Cromwell, himself battered and with a slight head wound, stands by the couch.*

*Cromwell.* It is not mortal. You are sure of that ?

*The Surgeon.* He is hurt, grievously, but he will live now.

*Cromwell.* The danger is gone ?

*The Surgeon.* Yes. But it will be slow.

*Ireton.* Whalley—there—in God's name, man. Tell Spilsby to beat down under General Cromwell. There's not a minute to lose. Whalley—that's good—come—no, man—left—left—now, once more. God is our strength.

*Cromwell.* There, my son. Brave, brave. It is well.

*Ireton (himself).* How is it—out there ?

*Cromwell.* They are scattered.

*Ireton.* Scattered. Write to Bridget.

*Cromwell.* Yes—it is done.

*Ireton.* Read.

*Cromwell (reading a letter from the table).* My

dearest daughter. This in all haste. We have fought to-day at Naseby. The field at all points is ours. They are destroyed beyond mending. Henry is hurt, but he is well attended, and the surgeons have no fear. He shall be brought to you by the first means. He has great honour to-day for himself and for us all.

*Ireton.* He loves you.

*[Cromwell adds a word to the letter. Then he leaves Ireton to the surgeons and speaks to Seth, who is at the table.]*

*Cromwell.* Seth, will you write, please. (*He dictates very quietly, not to disturb Ireton.*) To the Speaker of the Commons of England, at Westminster. Sir, this, of which the General advises you, is none other but the hand of God, and to Him alone belongs the glory, wherein none are to share with Him. The General served you with all faithfulness and honour; and the best commendation I can give him is, that I dare say he attributes all to God, and would rather perish than assume to himself. Which is an honest and a thriving way; and yet as much for bravery may be given to him, in this action, as to a man. Honest men served you faithfully in this action. Sir, they are trusty; I beseech you, in the name of God, not to discourage them. I wish this action may beget

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thankfulness and humility in all that are concerned in it. He that ventures his life for the liberty of his country, I wish he trust God for the liberty of his conscience, and you for the liberty he fights for. In this he rests, who is your most humble servant. . . . From the camp at Naseby Field, in Northamptonshire.

Oliver  
Cromwell

*[He signs the letter. Outside in the night the Puritan troops are heard singing the 117th Psalm, "O praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people. For His merciful kindness is great toward us; and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord." They listen, Ireton sleeps.]*

Cromwell. They sing well. (*He looks at a map, then, to the Aide*) Go to General Peyton. Tell him to keep three troops of horse four miles down the Leicester road there. He is not to move them till daybreak. And ask Colonel Reade to let me have his figures as soon as he can.

*The Aide.* Yes, sir.

*[He goes.]*

Cromwell. Finish that other letter, will you?

*[Seth writes again.]*

I can say this of Naseby. When I saw the enemy draw up and march in gallant order towards us, and we, a company of poor ignorant men to seek how

to order our battle—the General having commanded me to order all the horse—I could not, riding alone about my business, but smile out to God in my praises, in assurance of victory,

*[The Psalm is heard again.]*

because God would, by things which are not, bring to naught the things that are. Of which I had great assurance, and God did it.

*[The singing is still heard.]*

#### THE SCENE CLOSES

#### SCENE VI

*An evening in November, 1647. A room in Hampton Court where Charles the First, now a prisoner with the army, is lodged.*

*At a table, writing, is Neal, the king's secretary. He finishes his document, and going to a bureau locks it away. He returns to the table, and, taking up an unopened envelope, examines it carefully. As he is doing so Charles enters from an inner room.*

*Charles.* From Hamilton ?

*Neal.* Yes, sire.

*Charles.* Has it been opened ?

Neal. I think not.

Oliver  
Cromwell

[*Charles takes the letter, opens and reads it.*]

Charles. Good. The commissioners from Scotland are in London. They are prepared to hear from us.

Neal. Andrews goes to London to-night. He is to be trusted.

Charles. Everything begins to move for us again. To-morrow they will miss us here, eh, Neal? In a week we should be at Carisbrooke.

Neal. Do not be too confident, sire. Things have miscarried before.

Charles. But not this time, Neal, believe me. Their House and their army are at odds. I've seen to that. It has gained time, and perplexed their resolution. And now Scotland will strike again, and this time mortally. Yes, the end will be with us, mark me.

Neal. May Your Majesty reckon truly.

Charles. Is Cromwell coming to-night?

Neal. He said not.

Charles. Strangely, the fellow grows on me. But he's a fool, Neal. Brave, but a fool. He sees nothing. Indeed, he's too dull. Ireton too—they are heavy stuff. Clods. Poor country. She needs us again truly. To check such mummers as these—all means are virtuous for that, Neal, eh?

*Neal.* Your Majesty knows.

*Charles.* Yes, we need no counsel. You are sure that Cromwell was not coming to-night ?

*Neal.* That was as he said, sire.

*Charles.* Then let us consider. These Scots. What was it ? Did you set it down ?

*Neal.* Yes, sire.

*[He gets the paper that he put in the bureau, and gives it to Charles.]*

*Charles (reading it).* Yes. Write.

*[Neal does so on a large folio sheet.]*

Clause 1. For the reason that the Scots should invade England. Let the intrigues of Parliament with the army and its leaders—notably Oliver Cromwell—to the peril of the Church and the King, stand to the world in justification. Clause 2. The royal forces in England shall move when and as the Duke of Hamilton directs. Clause 3. The King shall guarantee Presbyterian control in England for three years from this date. But the King shall for himself be at liberty to use his own form of divine service. Clause 4. All opinion and practice of those who call themselves Independents are to be suppressed. To see that this is diligently done may be left to the King's pleasure. . . . Yes. Once we are at Carisbrooke. . . . Copy that, Neal. I will sign it. Let it go by Andrews to-night.

Neal. Yes, sire.

Charles. Do it now.

Oliver

Cromwell

*[Neal proceeds to do so. Charles moves across to a book-case between the table and the main door. As he stands there, there is a knock at the door.]*

Charles. Yes.

*[The door is opened by Cromwell, with whom is Ireton.]*

Charles. Mr Cromwell. We did not expect you.

Cromwell. No, sir. It is unexpected.

*[As the two men come into the room Charles covers Neal from them as he can. The secretary has no time but to conceal his note by placing it under a case of folio papers on the table. As the others approach the table, he bows and retires. Charles sits, and motions the others to do the same. Cromwell takes Neal's place.]*

Cromwell. We came, sir, to reassure ourselves.

Charles. As to what ?

Cromwell. Your Majesty knows that in treating with you as we have done these months past, we have been subject to suspicions.

Charles. I imagined that it might be so. But your character and your reputation, Mr Cromwell, can ignore these.

*Cromwell.* It is suggested that we become courtiers, and susceptible as courtiers are. But that is nothing. Continually we are told that Your Majesty will outwit us.

*Charles.* But that is too fantastic. Between men so open one with another. Our scruples—persuasion—yes, these may take time. We may not always easily understand each other there. But that there should be any question of duplicity between us—it is monstrous. We may disagree, stubbornly, Mr Cromwell, but we know each the other's thought.

*Cromwell.* I believe it. You know nothing of these Scotch agents in London ?

*Charles.* Scotch ?

*Ireton.* They arrived yesterday.

*Charles.* Who are they ?

*Cromwell.* You do not know, sir ?

*Charles.* I ? Indeed no.

*Cromwell.* I did not suppose it. But already I am beset by warnings. I dismiss them, giving my word in this for your integrity, as it were.

*Charles.* Minds are strained in these days. It is shameless of them to say this.

*Ireton.* It means so much, you see, sir. Intrigues with Scotland—there are none, we are assured—but if there were it would almost inevit-

ably bring Civil War again. The mere shadow of that in men's minds is enough indeed to overthrow them. No man can consider the possibility of that without desolation.

*Charles.* No. That is unquestionable.

*Cromwell.* And so I was minded to come, and be sure by word of mouth, so to speak. Your Majesty knows how suspicions creep in absence, even of those whom we trust. And I have shown, sir, that I trust you.

*Charles.* We are not insensitive.

*Ireton.* It is of that trust, truly worn, sir, that we may all yet look for a happy settlement.

*Charles.* It is my hope, devoutly.

*Cromwell.* Parliament bends a little to my persuasion. If I could but induce Your Majesty to treat no longer directly with them, but to leave all to me.

*Charles.* It is our Parliament still. We cannot slight them.

*Cromwell.* But, sir, you confuse things daily. If the army were no longer intact, it would be another matter. But now it is the army that must be satisfied—in the end there is the real authority. Remember, sir, that these men are not merely soldiers. They are the heart and the conscience of the nation in arms. By their arms they have



prevailed, how bloodily Your Majesty knows. They stand now to see that the settlement is not against that conscience that armed them.

*Charles.* But we must consider ourselves. It would be folly to anger the House.

*Cromwell.* The House can do nothing without us. And I have considered you, sir. I have persuaded the army that the monarchy is the aptest form of government for this country. It was difficult, but my belief has prevailed. I have even won respect for Your Majesty's person. Do but give us our guarantees, and you will mount a securer throne, I think, than any king has yet held in England.

*Charles.* But Parliament ——

*Ireton.* No, sir. Parliament's demands are not our demands. To give them what they ask will be to lose all opinion in the army. That would be fatal.

*Cromwell.* Parliament and the army are at one in asking for constitutional safeguards. All are agreed on that. But after that we are in dispute, irreconcilably. They want a Presbyterian despotism. This land, sir, has had enough of despotism, and we will not exchange one despotism for another. We, the army, demand liberty of opinion. We are the new Independents, sir, the Independents of the spirit. We are determined that henceforth in England no man shall suffer for his faith.



*Charles.* I respect these ambitions.

Oliver  
Cromwell

*Ireton.* Do but let us go to the army with that respect, and not a trooper but will renew your power for you.

*Charles.* A power a little cropped, eh, Mr Ireton?

*Cromwell.* No, sir, enlarged. You have ruled by interest and fear. You can go back to rule by the affection of a free people. You have the qualities, sir—why waste them?

*Charles.* You persuade well. Honestly, I am sure.

*Cromwell.* I could take all. I do not want it. I want to restore your fortune, to give you back a regenerate kingship. Will you take it, sir? It is of love I offer it, love of England, of your great office. And you should adorn that inheritance. Men should be proud to call you king, sir.

*Ireton.* We have that pride—and we have suffered.

*Cromwell.* I can disabuse rumour about Scotland. I can persuade Parliament about the presbytery—I can convince the army of your good faith as to tolerance, if you will but give me the word. Let us together make Charles Rex the noblest name of Christendom.

*Charles.* How shall I stand with the Episcopacy?

*Cromwell.* All tyrannies must go together. We mislike no bishops save that they stand by a tyrannous church. That we will destroy. It is there as I have said. We attack not faiths nor opinions, but despotism. Let a man think as he will, but he shall command no other man to think it.

*Ireton.* We will not persecute even our persecutors. But they shall stay their hands, now and for ever.

*Cromwell.* This is just; merciful even. Will you work with us together, sir, to the salvation of our country?

*Charles.* You are very patient.

*Cromwell.* To great ends. Why do you deliberate, sir? What invention is needed? All is so plain. And many wish you disaster. If you refuse this, it may be hard to deny them.

*Charles.* We do not fear disaster.

*Cromwell.* But I offer you an ascendancy undreamt of. It should be plain.

*Charles.* You offer much, and it should prosper. Or I think so. But I must consider. One has old habits, not easily to be put by. One grows to kingship thus, or thus—the manner does not readily change. But I will consider it.

*Cromwell.* Time presses.

Charles. Yes, but a day or two. Say three days. Oliver Cromwell

Cromwell. Three days then, sir. I brought Your Majesty this. (*He takes a miniature from his pouch.*) It is newly drawn by Mr Cooper. It is of a young man, Andrew Marvell, of whose verses Your Majesty would think well. He should do much. Cooper has drawn it well—it's very decisive in line, sir?

Charles. Yes; a little heavy there in the nostril, perhaps; but good. Yes, very.

Cromwell. I am told that Van Dyck admires him.

Charles. I have heard him say so.

Cromwell. It's generous of him—the methods are so different.

Charles. Van Dyck draws marvellously in sanguine. (*He takes a drawing from the drawer in front of him and places it before Cromwell, on the case of papers.*) That approaches any of the masters, I think.

Cromwell. Good—yes. And yet Hans Holbein was incomparable—not so assertive—no, copious, and yet as complete, simpler. But—yes, there is great dignity here.

[*He holds up the drawing in front of him, holding it against the folio case for firmness. Charles makes a movement, but*

*instantly restrains himself. Cromwell is about to replace the drawing and case on the table, when his glance falls on Neal's paper which is lying in front of him. He sees nothing, but a second glance arrests all his movement. After a moment he turns to look fixedly at the king. There is a silence, then :*

*Cromwell.* What in the name of God is this *(striking the paper with his hand) ?*

*Charles.* It is private to ourselves.

*Cromwell (rising).* To ourselves ? For our private pleasure we will destroy this country, and blast the people in it. Read it, Ireton.

*[Ireton takes the paper and rises.]*

*Charles (rising).* These are notes for our own contemplation.

*Cromwell.* Here are ten lines of the bitterest damnation that ever came from the mind of treason. *(Taking the paper again.)* The Scots to invade England. The King's arms to be raised again. Presbytery to . . . Freedom to be destroyed—and diligently, at the King's pleasure. Word blaspheming word as we have spoken. Disastrous man !

*Ireton.* How far has this gone ?

*Charles.* We are not before our judges.

*Cromwell.* It will come. This iniquity means Oliver  
we know not what new bitterness of destruction. Cromwell  
But know this, Charles Stuart, that when we draw  
the sword again it is the sword of judgment. Out  
there many call you the man of blood. I have  
laboured for you, have met them all in persuasion.  
I had prevailed. It is finished. Blood is upon us  
again, blood spilled for a perfidious king. The  
sword that we had put by for ever. My God, how  
I have feared it. Well, so be it. We go to the  
field again—but then, prepare you for the reckon-  
ing. It shall be to the uttermost.

*Charles.* This argument is ended.

*Cromwell.* All arguments are ended.

*[He goes with Ireton, taking the paper.]*

THE SCENE CLOSES

## SCENE VII

*Cromwell's house in London. The morning of  
January 30th, 1649, the day of the king's  
execution.*

*Outside the window can be seen the grey winter gloom,  
brightened by fallen snow. The room, in which  
a fire is burning, is empty, and for a time there*

*is silence. Then from a near street comes the soft sound of muffled drums.*

*Bridget runs in, and goes to the window, opening it. Then she goes back to the door, and calls.*

*Bridget.* Mother. [*She goes back to the window. Elizabeth (coming in).* Yes.

*Bridget.* It is the king. He is passing down to Whitehall.

*Elizabeth.* Don't look, child.

*Bridget.* I can see nothing but the pike-heads. The people seem very still. You can hear nothing but the drums.

[*A little later Mrs Cromwell comes in. She goes to a chair by the fire.*

*Mrs Cromwell.* Oliver has just sent from Whitehall for his great-coat. I've sent Seth with it.

*Bridget.* The king has just passed, grandmother.

*Elizabeth.* He has gone into Whitehall.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Men will pity him. He had no pity.

*Bridget.* Do you think father is right, grandmother? Saying that it had to be?

*Mrs Cromwell.* Yes, I do think so.

*Elizabeth.* He betrayed his own people. It was that.

*Mrs Cromwell.* There could be no safety or hope while he lived. Oliver  
Cromwell

*Bridget.* Yes. He betrayed his own people. That's it.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Kings must love, too.

*Elizabeth.* When your father wanted to give him back his throne, a little simple honesty in the king would have saved all. But he could not come to that.

*Bridget.* The drums have stopped.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Is Henry with your father ?

*Bridget.* Yes.

*Mrs Cromwell.* What is the time ?

*Elizabeth.* Nearly one o'clock.

*Bridget.* It must be past one.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Oliver will be the foremost man in England.

*Bridget.* Henry says he could be king.

*Elizabeth.* That he would never be, I know.

*Mrs Cromwell.* He will have to guide all.

*Bridget.* Don't you wish it could have been done without this, grandmother ?

*Mrs Cromwell.* When the world labours in anger, child, you cannot name the hour.

*Bridget.* But Henry thinks it is right, too.

*Mrs Cromwell.* If this be wrong, all was wrong.

*Bridget.* Yes. Thank you, grandmother. That is what I wanted. It was necessary.

*Elizabeth.* Henry meant to come back before the end, didn't he ?

*Bridget.* He said so.

*Mrs Cromwell.* It's very cold.

*Bridget.* I think it will snow again.

*Elizabeth.* What are the drums beating again for ?

*Bridget.* Perhaps—I don't know. Will you have another shawl, grandmother ?

*Mrs Cromwell.* No, thank you.

[*Ireton comes in.*

*Bridget.* Has anything happened ?

*Ireton.* Not yet. In a minute or two. At half-past one. It's three minutes yet.

*Bridget.* Is father there ?

*Ireton.* Yes.

*Elizabeth.* Not alone ?

*Ireton.* No. Fairfax and Harrison—five of them.

*Mrs Cromwell.* The king—very brave, I suppose ?

*Ireton.* Yes. That was inevitable. We are old campaigners.

*Elizabeth.* Oliver says that he has been noble since death was certain.

*Ireton.* Yes.

*Bridget.* If he had but lived so.



*Ireton.* He made life ignoble. He would have made it ignoble again, and always. He was a king and he despoiled his people. When that is, kings must perish.

Oliver  
Cromwell

*[There is a movement and sound of voices in the streets. Ireton opens the window. Elizabeth and Bridget stand with him.]*

*Ireton.* Yes. It is done.

*[Mrs Cromwell slowly moves across to the window and stands with the others.]*

*Mrs Cromwell.* Poor, silly king. Oliver will be here directly. Shut the window, Henry.

*[Ireton shuts the window. He, Elizabeth, and Bridget stand looking out. Mrs Cromwell returns to her seat. All are very still, and there is a long pause. Then, unseen and unheard, Cromwell comes in, moving slowly, his coat and hat still on, his boots carrying snow. He looks at his people, all with their backs to him. He walks across the room, and stands behind his mother, looking into the fire.]*

THE SCENE CLOSES

## SCENE VIII

*A November night in 1654, six years later. Mrs Cromwell's bedroom in Whitehall, where Cromwell is now installed as Protector.*

*Mrs Cromwell, now aged ninety-four, is on her death-bed. Standing beside her is Elizabeth, ministering to her.*

*Elizabeth.* Is that comfortable ?

*Mrs Cromwell.* Yes, my dear, very comfortable.

*Elizabeth.* Bridget is coming now. I must go down to Cheapside. I must see that man there myself.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Very well, my dear. Bridget is a good girl. I may be asleep before you come back. Good-night.

*Elizabeth (kissing her).* Good-night. (*Softly, at the door*) Bridget.

*Bridget (from the next room).* Yes, mother.

*Elizabeth.* Can you come ? I'm going now.

*Bridget.* Yes.

[*She comes in and Elizabeth goes.*

*Bridget.* Shall I read, grandmother ?

*Mrs Cromwell.* Yes, just a little. Mr Milton was reading to me this afternoon. Your father asked him to come. He has begun a very good poem, about Eden and the fall of man. He read

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me some of it. He writes extremely well. I think I should like to hear something by that young Mr Marvell. He copies them out for me—you'll find them in that book, there. There's one about a garden. I have marked a stanza.

*Bridget.* This one ? [*Reading.*

Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less  
Withdraws into its happiness ;  
The mind, that ocean where each kind  
Does straight its own resemblance find ;  
Yet it creates, transcending these,  
Far other worlds, and other seas ;  
Annihilating all that's made  
To a green thought in a green shade.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Yes. Far other worlds, and other seas. I wish your father would come. I want to go to sleep, and you never know.

*Bridget.* I think father is coming now.

[*Cromwell comes in. He wears plain civilian clothes.*

*Cromwell.* Well, mother dear. [*He kisses her.*

*Mrs Cromwell.* I'm glad you have come, my son. Though you are very busy, I'm sure.

*Cromwell.* Is there anything I can do ?

*Mrs Cromwell.* No, thank you. What date is this ?

*Cromwell.* The second of November.

*Mrs Cromwell.* It's nearly a year since they made you Protector, then.

*Cromwell.* Yes. I wonder.

*Mrs Cromwell.* You need not, son. You were right. There was none other. And you were right not to take a crown.

*Cromwell.* The monarchy will return. I know that.

*Bridget.* Why not always a commonwealth like this, father ?

*Cromwell.* Hereafter there shall be a true commonwealth. We have done that for England. But there must be a king. There is no one to follow me. I am an interlude, as it were. But henceforth kings will be for the defence of this realm, not to use it. That has been our work. It is so, mother ?

*Mrs Cromwell.* Truly, I think it. It will be a freer land because you have lived in it, my son. Our name may be forgotten, but it does not matter. You serve faithfully. I am proud.

*Cromwell.* You have been my blessed friend.

*Mrs Cromwell.* It was kind of Mr Milton to come this afternoon. I can't remember whether I thanked him as I should like to.

*Cromwell.* He likes to come.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Be kind to all poets, Oliver. Oliver  
They have been very kind to me. They have the Cromwell  
best doctrine.

*Cromwell.* That is an aim of mine. To find all  
men of worth and learning and genius. To give  
them due employment. The Lord speaks through  
them, I know. I would have none fail or want  
under my government.

*Mrs Cromwell.* I know that. Bridget, girl, be a  
stay to your father and your mother. They love  
you. If you should wed again, may you wed  
well.

*Bridget.* I will cherish my father's great estate,  
and I will be humble always.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Will you see if Amos Tanner is  
there ?

*Bridget.* Yes, grandmother. [*She goes.*]

*Mrs Cromwell.* And now, I am tired. Bless you,  
Oliver, my son. The Lord cause His face to shine  
upon you, and comfort you in all your adversities,  
and enable you to do great things for the glory of  
your most High God, and to be a relief unto His  
people. My dear son. I leave my heart with  
you. A good night. [*Bridget returns.*]

*Mrs Cromwell.* Is Amos Tanner here ?

*Bridget.* Yes, grandmother.

*Mrs Cromwell.* Ask him to sing to me. Very

quietly. The song he sang that night at Ely—  
you remember—when John and Henry were there.

*[Bridget goes out.]*

*Mrs Cromwell.* You have been a good son.

*Cromwell.* Mother, dear.

*[Bridget returns with Amos. Very quietly  
he sings.]*

When I shall in the churchyard lie,  
Poor scholar though I be,  
The wheat, the barley, and the rye,  
Will better wear for me.

For truly have I ploughed and sown,  
And kept my acres clean,  
And written on my churchyard stone  
This character be seen,

“His flocks, his barns, his gear he made  
His daily diligence,  
Nor counted all his earnings paid  
In pockets-full of pence.”

*[While he is singing Mrs Cromwell falls  
asleep, and he goes. Cromwell stands for  
a time with Bridget, watching his mother  
asleep.]*

*Cromwell.* Daughter, we must be loving, one

with another. No man is sure of himself, ever. Oliver  
He can but pray for faith. Cromwell

*Bridget.* Father, you have done all that a man might do. You have delivered England.

*Cromwell.* I have said a word for freedom, a poor, confused word. It was all I could reach to. We are frail, with our passions. We are beset.

*[He prays at his mother's bedside, Bridget standing beside him.]*

“Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, a mean instrument to do the people some good, and Thee service. And many of them have set too high a value upon me, though others wish and would be glad of my death. But, Lord, however Thou dost dispose of me, continue and go on to do good for them. Give them one heart, and mutual love. Teach those who look too much upon Thy instrument to depend more upon Thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are Thy people too. And pardon the folly of this short prayer, even for Jesus Christ's sake. And give us a good night if it be Thy pleasure.”

THE SCENE CLOSES





*Robert E. Lee*



TO  
DAVID

*THE CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF THEIR  
APPEARANCE ARE—*

MAJOR PERRIN  
AN ORDERLY  
GENERAL SCOTT  
ROBERT E. LEE  
TOM BUCHANAN  
RAY WARRENTON  
DAVID PEEL  
DUFF PENNER  
JOHN STEAN  
A GIRL  
MRS STEAN  
A SERVANT  
GENERAL J. E. B. STUART  
HIS AIDE  
AN AIDE TO GENERAL LEE  
A SENTRY  
CAPTAIN MASON  
CAPTAIN UDALL  
GENERAL STONEWALL JACKSON  
COLONEL HEWITT  
JEFFERSON DAVIS  
HIS SECRETARY  
MRS MEADOWS

# Robert E. Lee

## SCENE I

*The morning of April 18th, 1861.*

*The room of General Scott, Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army, at the War Office, Washington.*

*At a side-table an Officer is writing. After a few moments he rings a bell, and an Orderly comes in.*

*The Officer.* This clock has stopped. That's twice in a week. Why don't you keep it wound up ?

*The Orderly (winding it).* I'm sorry, sir.

*The Officer.* Yes. It's no use if it doesn't go, is it ?

*The Orderly.* No, sir.

*The Officer.* No. Take that to the people in Room 26 (*giving a paper*). What time is Colonel Lee's appointment ?

*The Orderly (consulting a pad).* Twelve o'clock, sir.

*The Officer.* What's the time now ?

*The Orderly (looking at the clock in his hand).* About—I don't exactly know, sir.

*The Officer.* That's just it. You should keep

it wound up. Let me know. Where's the General ?

*The Orderly.* I believe he's washing his face, sir.

*The Officer (in parenthesis).* He's always washing his face.

*The Orderly.* Yes, sir.

*The Officer.* Don't be insubordinate. Let me know the time. (*As the Orderly is going*) By the way, you come from Alabama, don't you ?

*The Orderly.* Yes, sir.

*The Officer.* Then you ought to know better.

*The Orderly.* I beg your pardon, sir ?

*The Officer.* You've seceded.

*The Orderly.* I have, sir ?

*The Officer.* Your state has, sir. That's the sixth. Word has come this morning. What do you mean by it ?

*The Orderly.* That's very awkward.

*The Officer.* What shall you do ?

*The Orderly.* I don't know, sir. I mean—I don't want to go away—but, you see, I come from Alabama, sir. It's going to be very difficult.

*The Officer.* Rebellion, that's what it is.

*The Orderly.* I don't want to rebel, sir.

*The Officer.* Alabama does.

*The Orderly.* Of course, if you put it like that,

sir, I'm sure I don't know. I've a kind of a faith in Alabama.

Robert E.  
Lee

*The Officer.* You're a soldier of the United States.

*The Orderly.* I know, sir. But Alabama. Do you think I ought to fight against Alabama, sir? You see, I come from there.

*The Officer.* It is not for me to decide.

*The Orderly.* No, sir. I shall have to decide for myself. I see that.

*The Officer.* Put the clock right.

*The Orderly.* Yes, sir. [*He goes, taking the clock.*

[*The Officer takes some papers from his table to the General's. As he is arranging them, General Scott appears at the door, where he turns and speaks into the room beyond.*

*Scott.* Empson, send that blackboard in.

[*The answer comes, "Yes, sir."*

*Scott.* Dirty place this office, Perrin.

*The Officer* (referring to his hands). I can't say I've noticed it, sir.

*Scott.* Very dirty. Have to keep on washing.

[*The Orderly comes in, with a blackboard and easel, and the clock.*

*Scott.* There.

[*The Orderly places the blackboard above Scott's table, and the clock on the Officer's, and goes.*

[*On the blackboard is a rough outline map of the twenty-nine states of the Union, with five of them, South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, and Louisiana, marked off with a chalk cross. To these Scott now adds another, marking off Alabama.*

Scott. Alabama. That's bad.

*The Officer.* There's no word from Virginia yet, sir.

Scott. They were still in session last night. We may hear at any moment.

*The Officer.* If they go, it will be a long business.

Scott. Two years wouldn't settle it, Perrin.

*The Officer (indicating paper).* The recruiting reports are good this morning, sir. Over half the President's seventy-five thousand in three days.

Scott (*consulting the papers on his table*). Yes—yes. What's the time?

*The Officer.* Just on twelve o'clock, sir.

Scott. If Virginia goes, we shall lose Lee.

*The Officer.* Surely not, sir. A soldier all his life.

Scott. I hope not, but I think so.

[*The Orderly comes in.*

*The Orderly.* Colonel Lee is here, sir.

Scott. Ask him to come in.

[*The Orderly goes.*



Scott. You needn't go, Perrin. Take notes.

Robert E.

Perrin. Yes, sir.

Lee

[*The Orderly shows in Robert E. Lee, at this time a Lieutenant-Colonel in the United States Army. The Orderly goes.*]

Scott. Good-morning, Colonel.

Lee. Good-morning, sir.

Scott. This is Major Perrin. You've no objection to his hearing what we have to say ?

Lee. No, certainly.

Scott. Sit down, please. [They sit.]

Scott. It is at the President's suggestion that I asked you to come.

Lee. I am honoured, sir.

Scott. The problem is at the moment common—lamentably common. But we felt that your case was a special one, or, rather, in a special sense a representative one. The esteem in which you stand in Virginia, and your personal record in the army, make your views of particular—as I say of representative—importance. We considered that a personal interview was the proper way of learning them.

Lee. I welcome your confidence.

Scott. You are aware that six states have already declared for secession from the Union ?

Lee. I understood five.

*Scott.* Alabama's decision comes this morning.

*Lee.* I had not heard.

*Scott.* Do you approve ?

*Lee.* If I were a mere spectator of events, I should say no.

*Scott.* A spectator ?

*Lee.* It can hardly be an abstract question with me, you see, sir.

*Scott.* You mean Virginia ?

*Lee.* Being a Virginian, yes, sir.

*Scott.* Your state, you mean, right or wrong ?

*Lee.* Right and wrong are such dangerous words for men to use, ever.

*Scott.* Duty is a plain thing, Colonel Lee.

*Lee.* It should be, sir. But for it we may have to forfeit the good opinion of men that we cherish. My duty may not seem to me, for example, what you consider it should mean.

*Scott.* Your mind is fixed ?

*Lee.* No—it is very gravely troubled.

*Scott.* Virginia's decision is not yet announced.

*Lee.* The Convention was sitting late into the night, I hear.

*Scott.* I gather that the indications are that she will follow the others.

*Lee.* In view of what has happened, I fear so.

*Scott.* You fear so ?

*Lee.* Yes. I am opposed to secession on principle. More, I do not think the issue upon which it is proposed a sufficient one. I would gladly see every slave freed rather than that the Union should be broken.

Robert E.  
Lee

*Scott.* You hold your commission under that Union.

*Lee.* I know, sir. It has made my life a fortunate one.

*Scott.* Then where can be the difference in opinion of which you speak?

*Lee.* I am two things, sir. I am not a statesman, nor do I in any other way control public policy. I am a soldier. But before that I am a citizen of Virginia. If my state decides to dispute the authority of the service in which I have for so long had the honour to be, I may regret the decision, but I may feel it my duty to respect it in my action.

*Scott.* Then let me put it more explicitly. The Government, as you know, has declared war on the rebel states.

*Lee.* The seceding states.

*Scott.* The rebel states, Colonel Lee. Be plain about that. Major Anderson has been forced to surrender at Fort Sumter. The President's appeal for seventy-five thousand men is being

answered eagerly. We are facing no holiday campaign. Other states will doubtless join the rebels. Two years will hardly see it through.

*Lee.* I should have said four, sir.

*Scott.* I was discussing the situation as a whole with President Lincoln yesterday evening. You were much spoken of. There is no officer in the army of whom he has a higher opinion, and I was privileged to say how just I considered that opinion to be. He instructed me to offer you the command of all Union forces in the field. I may say for myself that I think that even so great a distinction has been fully earned, Colonel Lee, and I could make the offer to no one with so much satisfaction.

*Lee.* The President's confidence, and yours, sir, are very much above my merit. I cannot express my sense of this. But what am I to say ?

*Scott.* To say ? How do you mean, to say ?

*Lee.* Virginia has not spoken.

*Scott.* The army that you serve calls you to lead it. And you ask what you shall say.

*Lee.* To lead it against whom ?

*Scott.* Against rebels to their country.

*Lee.* It may be against Virginia.

*Scott.* Then still against rebels.

*Lee.* Against my own people.

*Scott.* You are a soldier, you say. You are under orders. Robert E.  
Lee

*Lee.* I have been allowed to serve under you, sir. I know what discipline is — I do not need to be reminded. There have been times when I have obeyed orders with no very light heart. When I arrested John Brown at Harper's Ferry, I could have wished that the duty had fallen to another. For I believed the old man had conscience in him. But then obedience was against my private feelings only. Now it may be against my public loyalty to the soil that made me. My Virginia. You may be asking me to invade, perhaps to destroy my own homeland. Do you wonder that I answer "What am I to say" ?

*Scott.* Suppose Virginia to stand with the Union ?

*Lee.* It is unlikely. But then I am merely a Lieutenant-Colonel.

*Scott.* And otherwise ?

*Lee.* I think I should have to offer my resignation. I should ask for twenty-four hours in which to decide. But I can see but one conclusion open to me.

*[There is a knock at the door.]*

*Scott.* What's that ? See what it is, Perrin.

*[Perrin, who has been making his notes, goes to the door. The Orderly is there.]*

*The Orderly.* This has just been brought from

the White House, sir. It was to be given to the General at once.

*Perrin.* All right.

[*The Orderly goes ; Perrin gives a letter to Scott, and returns to his table.*]

*Scott (after reading).* It is from the President. Virginia has declared for secession.

*Lee (after a pause, rising).* Virginia. Fifty-three years of age. I beg your pardon, sir. Is there anything else to say ?

*Scott.* Thirty of those years you have been a gallant soldier, Colonel Lee. I do not forget our days in Mexico together. Think of them, too. It would be a hard day should you turn rebel—no, it's the only word. (*Rising*) You have your twenty-four hours.

*Lee.* Thank you, sir. I do not accept the word, and I can foresee but one answer. But I thank you, and I shall care deeply for your respect if I can keep it.

*Scott (shaking hands).* Good-bye.

*Lee.* Good-bye, sir.

[*Perrin opens the door, and Lee goes.*]

*Scott.* That's the best soldier in America to-day.

*Perrin.* Why don't you arrest him, sir ?

*Scott.* Don't be a damned fool, Perrin.

*Perrin.* Certainly, sir.

*Scott (marking Virginia with a cross on the black-*

board). That's worst of all. Ask McClellan, Bryce, and Simpson to meet me here at three o'clock this afternoon. I've got chalk all over myself. I must go and wash. Robert E.  
Lee

[*He goes.*]

[*Perrin takes some papers from Scott's table to his own and rings the bell. The Orderly comes in.*]

*The Orderly.* Yes, sir ?

*Perrin.* Find out at once where Generals McClellan and Bryce and Colonel Simpson are, and let me know. And take that blackboard back.

*The Orderly.* Yes, sir. (*He goes to the blackboard. As he is about to lift it—*) Virginia, sir ? Has Virginia gone too, sir ?

*Perrin.* It looks as though it might be so.

*The Orderly.* But Colonel Lee is a Virginian.

*Perrin.* Well, what of that ?

*The Orderly.* Is he going to be a rebel too, sir ?

*Perrin.* Take the blackboard away, and do as I told you.

*The Orderly.* I wish I could speak to Colonel Lee. It's going to be a very difficult matter. I beg your pardon, sir. [*He goes, taking the blackboard.*]

*Perrin* (*back at his papers, after a moment, in interrogation*). Don't be a damned fool, Perrin ?

THE SCENE CLOSES

## SCENE II

*In the woods near Arlington, Virginia. Early afternoon of the same day.*

*Warmly dressed, and seated around a wood fire, three young hunters are finishing their mid-day meal. They are Tom Buchanan, six foot two, a white hope of the sixties, if such things were wanted then, and his inclinations had turned to the Fancy, twenty-two years or so of age, side-whiskers, and all geniality ; Ray Warrenton, of the same age, the heir of one of the First Families of Virginia, and not unpleasantly aware of it, very elegant, his good form a touch self-conscious but still good ; and David Peel, rather older, a dreamer who no more confuses dreaming with stupor than he does over-emphasis with passion.*

*Buchanan.* It's been a good trip. You never shot better, David.

*Peel.* I don't know that I wouldn't just as soon miss.

*Warrenton.* I thought we all shot rather well.

*Buchanan.* Well, we may all need to before long.

*Warrenton.* I suppose it's all known by now.

*Buchanan.* I expect your father was right.

*Warrenton.* Yes, we shall be in it sure enough. He said he should certainly vote for seceding at

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the convention. In fact, all the Warrentons feel that about it. Robert E. Lee

*Peel.* Of course, if the Warrentons say so.

*Warrenton.* They've had a good deal to do with making Virginia, you can't get over that.

*Peel.* Ego et rex meus, eh?

*Warrenton.* What's he talking about?

*Buchanan.* Never mind, Ray. Warrentons for ever.

*Warrenton.* That's just what they will be. As it was in the beginning—but what does he mean about rex meus?

*Peel.* Golden lads and girls all must—perhaps not the Warrentons, though.

*Warrenton.* You know, David, you're the sort of fellow who ought to have discouraged Christopher Columbus.

*Buchanan.* I wonder whether they've sent for Colonel Lee at Washington yet.

*Warrenton.* My father said they were sure to at once.

*Buchanan.* Perhaps we shall hear about it to-night.

*Peel.* I shouldn't be surprised if the party is off.

*Buchanan.* What do you suppose he will do?

*Warrenton.* Lee of Virginia? What Virginia does, of course.

*Buchanan.* I saw him at Arlington a month ago. He didn't think there was any chance of trouble then.

*Peel.* There oughtn't to have been any chance. We ought to have got together over it somehow. These political fellows will do anything with you.

*Warrenton.* But you can't have Washington interfering like that. Slavery is part of the Constitution, anyway.

*Peel.* Well, it's no good arguing about it.

*Buchanan.* I see what Ray means, though.

*Peel.* I see what he means, but where's the sense in killing each other about it? The question will still be there when half of us are shot to pieces.

*Buchanan.* Well, we don't want to fight.

*Warrenton.* We only ask to be let alone.

*Peel.* Mr Lincoln doesn't see it like that.

*Warrenton.* But what does Mr Lincoln know about Virginia?

*Peel.* He happens to be President.

*Buchanan.* You don't know that. We may be out of it by now.

*Warrenton.* Quite right, too, if we are. The Warrentons have been at Mount Weston a hundred and seventy years. What can the backwoods of Illinois know about people like that?

*Peel.* A hundred and seventy years. There was

a battle at Marathon once. I believe that was even longer ago. Robert E.  
Lee

*Warrenton.* Yes, but Mr Lincoln didn't interfere with that, and we aren't at Marathon, anyway.

*Buchanan.* David doesn't mean anything.

*Warrenton.* I don't suppose he does. It doesn't sound like it.

*Peel.* But we can't get over the opinion of a man like Mr Lincoln so easily.

*Warrenton.* If his opinion is that he can treat Virginians like schoolboys, he ought to keep it to himself.

*Peel.* Have you seen him ?

*Warrenton.* No, and I don't want to.

*Peel.* I heard his Inaugural. There's something great about him.

*Buchanan.* You talk as though you thought we ought to give in.

*Peel.* No. I don't really know enough about it. I only feel that the people who do know ought somehow to understand each other, and keep things straight.

*Buchanan.* But if Virginia went out, you wouldn't hesitate ?

*Peel.* Of course I shouldn't. As far as that goes, we're in for a war on one side or the other whatever Virginia does. Some of them are certain to go.

Virginia in particular doesn't seem to me to matter so much.

*Warrenton.* What are you talking about—of course Virginia matters.

*Peel.* You're not very quick sometimes, Ray.

*Warrenton.* Well, I'm going to be quick about this. If Virginia is out, I'm in the army to-morrow.

*Buchanan.* Naturally, we shall all be that.

*Peel.* Yes, we shall all be that.

*Buchanan.* It will be a great thing.

*Peel.* Like shooting straight—and yet——

*Warrenton.* Two Warrentons were with George Washington at Yorktown.

*Buchanan.* I've heard them say that Colonel Lee is the best brain in the Army. Mr Lincoln won't want to lose him.

*Warrenton.* But he will. Lee for Virginia—don't you make any mistake about that. He'll be a man to follow.

*Peel.* It will be bare feet before we finish—if we live to the finish.

*Warrenton.* Nonsense. They'll just beat against us till they are tired out. And who knows, we may smash Washington itself.

*Peel.* Oh, we shall fight well enough, as well as they, better if you like. But I see it all ahead—

one year, two, three, perhaps four. And we shall win to-day, and to-day. There's good blood in us, we shall become another wonder of the world, Warrentons and the rest of us. And then always to-morrow we shall wake up, and see them, the beaten ones, before us, stronger and bigger than ever. And so it will go on. And our clothes will wear out, and we shall be hungry, and we shall have nothing to shoot straight with any more. And there will be just graves, and a story, and America.

Robert E.  
Lee

*Warrenton.* Here, I say—you're pretty dismal, David.

*Buchanan.* Well, it's worth coming to bare feet for, anyway.

*Peel.* Yes, it's worth it. Once thinking is over, it's worth it—that's the mystery.

*Warrenton.* I don't see any mystery. It's just a plain quarrel, and it's an old way of settling it.

*Peel.* Old—and strange.

*Warrenton.* Well, I don't see it.

*Buchanan.* We ought to be going. It will take us two hours yet, and they want us to be at Arlington Heights by seven. Where's Duff? *(He calls into the woods)* Duff—Duff! *(He calls in the other direction)* Duff—Du—u—u—f!

*[The others are preparing to start. For a*

*few moments there is no answer to Buchanan's call. Then in the distance is heard a banjo, and the tune of "Dixie's Land."*

*Buchanan (calling again). Duff.*

*A voice (in the distance, the banjo still playing).  
Coming.*

*[The banjo comes rapidly nearer, while knapsacks and rifles are gathered up.*

*Buchanan. Duff will take his banjo to the war with him.*

*Warrenton. Yes—what's that about music? Some poet said it, didn't he? Something about savages.*

*Peel. Don't you have anything to do with them, Ray. They'll upset you.*

*Warrenton. What, savages?*

*Peel. No, poets.*

*Warrenton. Honestly, though, what's the use of them?*

*Peel. I couldn't tell you.*

*Warrenton. I'm not clever enough, you mean, I had an aunt, though, who used to read one of them. Hemans, I think his name was.*

*Peel. Mrs Hemans.*

*Warrenton. Good Lord, do women do it too?*

*Peel. Your type's a very persistent one, Ray.*

Warrenton. I suppose that's meant to be no compliment either. Robert E. Lee

*[The banjo arrives. Its player is Duff Penner, a black-haired, stockish young man, whose chief concern in life is to use up an inexhaustible supply of energy and good spirits. He has been sent into the woods to play his banjo by himself.]*

Penner. Time to go, time to go, and here's the fellow on the old banjo.

Buchanan. I've told you before about that.

Penner. Go on telling, Tom, my boy. I've thought it all out—played it out, you might say, played it out as clear as moonshine or a split apple. Virginia, I said, are you going to give way? And No, said Virginia, no, Duff, no, not on your life and your old banjo. So I'm for a soldier. I shall say to Colonel Lee to-night, "Colonel, I'm for a soldier." Now, boys, we're all for soldiers, aren't we?

Peel. We're all for soldiers, Duff.

Penner. Then let us all say to Colonel Lee, "Colonel, we're all for soldiers, and we want to be with you, and we want to be together."

Buchanan. That's good, Duff. Together is good. Shall we?

Peel. Must the banjo go too?

*Penner.* David Peel, your name may be David, but you're a Philistine.

*Warrenton.* That's it, that's just what he is. Put that with your "rex meus."

*Peel.* Admirable banjo. I dare say we shall need it. Banjos won't be common.

*Warrenton.* You know, that sounds simple enough, but I can't understand even that.

*Peel.* I'm sorry. I mean to be plain.

*Warrenton.* It seems to me you're always flitting round the corner.

*Peel.* There aren't many straight roads for us.

*Warrenton.* There you are again. I find plenty.

*Buchanan.* Straight or twisting, we shall be together, though.

*Penner* (*strumming*).

We're going for soldiers,  
For soldiers we will go—  
Duff and David, Thomas and Ray,  
Playing on the old banjo.

*Peel.* No more hunting—for which of us, I wonder.

*Buchanan.* Don't think things like that, David.

*Peel.* They think themselves, don't they?

*Warrenton.* We've just got to think one thing—hit and hit hard.



Peel. Don't worry about me, Ray.

Robert E.  
Lee

Buchanan. Come along. All ready ?

Penner. To the tune of Dixie. By orders of the day.

*[He plays "Dixie Land," and he, Buchanan, and Warrenton sing the words :*

"To the land, to the land, to the land, to the land,  
I wish I was in Dixie."

*[While they are doing so, Peel is gazing into the valley, in the direction they are going.*

Peel. Ssh !

Buchanan. What is it, David ?

*[They stop singing.*

Peel. There. Do you see him ?

*[He slowly raises his rifle, aims, and fires.*

Buchanan. By thunder ! That's deadly. Four hundred yards if it's a foot.

Penner. I'm on your side, David, not a doubt of it.

Peel. We can pick him up. Where did you tell them to wait, Tom ?

Buchanan. Just down the road.

Peel. Good.

Penner. By order, as I said.

*[He plays again, and they all go, singing "Dixie."*

THE SCENE CLOSES

### SCENE III

*The evening of the same day.*

*A room at the Lee House, Arlington Heights, brightly lit and cordial. It looks out on to a verandah, supported on the far side by the large columns of early colonial architecture. From these we should look across falling ground, down to the Potomac River. The windows are closed, but the clear spring night can be seen through them, the curtains being drawn to show the coloured lanterns that are hung on the verandah.*

*A door of the room is open, to a room beyond, from which comes the sound of dance music. Mr Stean, a man of forty-five, dances into the room with his partner, followed by Ray Warrenton and his. They go round the room and out of it, and two other couples, the men being Duff Penner and Tom Buchanan, follow them, dancing. Buchanan and his partner stop.*

*The Girl.* Shall we sit down ?

*Buchanan.* Yes, let us.

*[They do so. Penner and his partner complete the round and go out.]*

*Girl.* I think it's wonderful of Colonel Lee, don't you ?

*Buchanan.* You mean dancing to-night ?

*Girl.* Yes.

*Buchanan.* I wonder what he will say.

Robert E.  
Lee

*Girl.* Mrs Lee tells me his answer has to be given by twelve o'clock to-morrow.

*[They go on talking as Penner and his partner dance in again, laughing.]*

*Penner (stopping in front of Buchanan).* I say, Tom, Elizabeth says that if you go soldiering I've got to take care of you.

*Buchanan (rising).* That's very comforting. He's going to take his banjo, Betty.

*Elizabeth (sitting).* You speak as though it were all settled.

*Girl.* I don't see what can stop it now, after this morning's declaration. We're really at war now, aren't we, Mr Buchanan ?

*Buchanan.* There's no official answer from Washington to our note yet. But it comes to that. We shall hear by the morning.

*[David Peel comes in with his partner, and is followed a moment later by Colonel Lee and his, Mrs Stean. When they are half-way round the room the dance finishes. Peel and his partner join Buchanan and the others. Lee takes his partner to a seat by the window, and stands looking out. The other group talks.]*

*Lee.* Thank you. I must say a waltz is best of all.

*His Partner.* And that's a beautiful tune. It's very good of you to dance at all to-night, Colonel. John and I quite expected to be put off.

*Lee.* There will be so much to put off, you see. It seemed a pity to spoil what may be the last chance—or, the last for a long time. Besides, I was thinking of myself. I like dancing. It composes me.

*His Partner.* I suppose one mustn't be inquisitive?

*Lee.* As to——?

*His Partner.* What is happening.

*Lee.* I think you know as much as I do. We have seceded, that's all.

*His Partner.* But you yourself?

*Lee.* That can't be very important.

*His Partner.* Come now, Colonel, you know it is very important, or if you don't, everybody else does.

*Lee.* No, no. If I resign, I'm merely a citizen of Virginia.

*His Partner.* Everybody knows that the South is sure to offer you something high up.

*Lee.* I don't seek it.

*His Partner.* It's desperately troubling. What do you think John ought to do? Of course, he has

lived in Virginia for fifteen years, but he belongs to  
Massachusetts at heart.

Robert E.  
Lee

*Lee.* Yes, that's bad. How can I advise, or anybody? Each man will have to decide for himself.

*His Partner.* Somebody told him this afternoon that General Scott had asked you to command the northern armies.

*Lee.* I don't know who could have heard that. Not that there's any secret about it.

*His Partner.* Oh, I shouldn't be asking questions, I know. But every mooring seems suddenly to have broken.

*Lee.* I know. The Potomac there is so peaceful, isn't it? All my life it has seemed so friendly, looking at it from north or south. And now, for both shores, what is coming?

*His Partner.* They oughtn't to have done it.

*Lee.* It's gone beyond that now. There's nothing left for each of us now but the last decision, and then to forget that it ought not to have been done, that somebody was foolish. We shall all have to believe that we are wise and just. That's the way of these things. Argument is over, and faith begins.

*His Partner.* But faith in what? Massachusetts shall we say, or Virginia?

*Lee.* Faith that we have chosen well.

*His Partner.* For the man there, and the man here ?

*Lee.* For both of them ; I would ask no less for either.

*His Partner.* And yet the decision is troubling you.

*Lee.* Very little now. A life's work, a devotion, some credit by good fortune—it takes a moment to put all these aside, but hardly longer.

*His Partner.* Even though, as I have heard you say, you don't altogether agree with Virginian policy ?

*Lee.* To-morrow I shall have forgotten that Virginia has a policy, and remember only that she is Virginia.

*His Partner.* That's how John loves Massachusetts, I know it. What are we to do ? You see, I'm Virginian too.

*Lee.* You must go with him—if you think you must. Did Mrs Lee thank you for the bacon ?

*His Partner.* Yes—I'm glad you like it.

*Lee.* We can't seem to manage it here just like that, somehow. How far did you get, Tom ?

*Buchanan.* Only to Whitewater Woods, sir. That kept us busy.

*Lee.* You said you wanted to speak to me. Is it something private ?

*Buchanan.* Well no, Colonel Lee, it's not that. Robert E.  
Of course, we're all thinking about the same thing. Lee  
Would you mind if I fetched David and Ray ?

*Lee.* Certainly not.

[*Buchanan goes. Lee opens the door on to the verandah.*

*Lee.* It's quite warm. Spring is forward this year. Do you mind the door being open, ladies ?

*His Partner.* No, Colonel.

*Elizabeth.* I'm sure we could all do with a little air, Colonel Lee. I suppose there has got to be fighting ?

*Lee.* I'm afraid so, Betty. A lot of it.

*Elizabeth.* Tom and I were to be married next month.

*Lee.* I shouldn't put it off.

*Elizabeth.* But—mightn't it be worse for him ?

*Lee.* You're a dear girl, Betty. Of course not. Very much better for him, whatever happens.

[*Buchanan returns, with Peel and Warrenton.*

*Lee.* Well ? Another kind of convention, eh ?

*Buchanan.* You see, sir, we may not get a chance of speaking to you again like this. We don't know what you're going to do, and it's not for us to ask. But there's certain to be a call for volunteers to-morrow, I suppose, sir ?

*Lee.* I expect so.

*Buchanan.* Then David and Ray and Duff and I are going to join.

*Duff.* Yes, we're all for soldiers, sir.

*Lee.* Well ?

*Buchanan.* And if you are on Virginia's side, sir——

*Lee.* If I am on Virginia's side ?

*Buchanan.* I beg your pardon, sir. I mean——

*Peel.* It wasn't for us to assume what you were going to do, sir.

*Lee.* All right, Tom, only—— It's no matter. What is it ?

*Buchanan.* We want to serve together, and we hoped that it might be possible for you to let us do it under you, sir.

*Elizabeth.* Do let them, Colonel Lee.

*Warrenton.* I know my father would be awfully pleased if you said yes, sir.

*Lee.* He's a very old friend of mine, Ray. Very well, Tom, I'll do what I can, I promise.

*Buchanan.* Thank you, sir.

*Penner.* Do you think, sir, I could be allowed to take a small matter of a banjo with me ?

*Lee.* I shouldn't ask that officially if I were you, Duff.

*Penner.* I see, sir. Just a private banjo.

*Lee.* Keep in touch with me, all of you.



*Peel.* We will, sir. [*John Stean comes back.* Robert E.

*Stean (to his wife).* We must be going, my dear. Lee

It takes a good hour.

*Mrs Stean (rising).* Yes, John. Thank you so much, Colonel Lee.

[*She shakes hands with him, and the rest.*

*Lee (to Stean).* I'm very sorry about your difficulties, Mr Stean.

*Stean.* And I for yours, Colonel. Thank you. I've many good friends in Virginia. And Lucy. It's very hard.

*Lee.* I hope we shall all be good friends again yet.

*Stean.* Good-night, Colonel.

[*He shakes hands, and goes with Mrs Stean, their voices coming from the next room.*

"Good-night, Mrs Lee . . . Good-night, Mrs Lee." *Duff and his partner follow.*

*Elizabeth.* Will you take me, Tom? I must be going too.

*Buchanan.* Yes, my dear.

*Elizabeth (shaking hands with Lee).* You are quite sure about next month?

*Lee.* Quite.

*Elizabeth.* Thank you.

*Buchanan.* Good-night, sir.

*Lee.* Good-night, Tom.

[*Buchanan and Elizabeth go.*

*Warrenton.* I expect my people will be ready.  
Good-night, sir.

*Lee.* Good-night, Ray. [*Warrenton goes.*]

*Peel.* Might I speak to you, Colonel Lee ?

*Lee.* Why, certainly.

*Peel.* It's no good pretending it's just a guest and his host now. It's Colonel Lee and one of thousands of young Virginians. You haven't answered Washington yet, sir, but we all know well enough what the answer will be. And I'm going to join the army to-morrow—to fight against—whom?—the fellows just the other side of the Potomac there. So that's all settled. But will you answer a question, sir ?

*Lee.* If I can.

*Peel.* Are you happy about Virginia, sir ?

*Lee.* David, my boy, I was bred and have lived as a soldier. I think the politicians are often foolish enough, and stubborn too. But you've got to leave these things to them. If they make mistakes, so should we. Whichever way the decision had gone there would have been some misgiving.

*Peel.* I can't help feeling that the quarrel, whatever it is, is so little beside the desolation that's coming.

*Lee.* I know. But everybody feels that really.

The trouble is that the world goes on without caring for our feelings. Only an odd adventurer here and there really wants wars. But the strain comes, and men's wits break under it, and fighting is the only way out. A weak way, but the only one.

Robert E.  
Lee

*Peel.* But if everyone had sense——

*Lee.* Everyone has—up to the strain at breaking-point. War is the anger of bewildered peoples in front of questions that they can't answer. But these questions that they can't answer will come, and the anger will come too. I loathe war—I've seen too much of it. But I've never regretted being a soldier.

*Peel.* Then you do think that they may be as right as we are—or we as wrong as they ?

*Lee.* Robert Lee may think it. But Virginia cannot and must not think it. And Robert Lee is now part of Virginia. You aren't David Peel any longer—you are a part of a people that cannot answer a question. You may be wiser than Virginia, but your wisdom doesn't matter till she doesn't need you any more in her quarrel. I can see it in no other way.

*Peel.* You mean that you, or any of us, may be wiser than the State, and yet the State is the great good for which we must give all, life perhaps ?

*Lee.* A tragic mystery. But inescapable. And a mystery not without beauty, strangely not without it.

*Peel.* I think I see a little.

*Lee.* It all tells us not to put too high a value on life—or, rather, a wrong one. If to go on living were the only possible good, it would be different.

*Peel.* Then—but it would be impertinent.

*Lee.* No—ask anything.

*Peel.* Everybody knows about your seeing General Scott this morning. Why did you feel you couldn't give your answer then?

*Lee.* Because the habit of thirty years is difficult to throw off in a moment. I wanted to keep an open mind for a few hours if possible, for any consideration to come in that might. So much depended on the answer. But I had little doubt as to what it would be. I prepared General Scott for it.

*Peel.* Thank you. I know what you are giving up.

*Lee.* Whatever we give up, David, we keep something that we want more.

[*The music starts again.*]

*Lee.* That's the last dance. I know they will very kindly excuse me. But go and do your duty, David.

*Peel (shaking hands).* Good-night, sir.

Robert E.

*[He goes. Lee*

*[Lee looks out for a moment across the river. Then he goes out by a door on the other side of the room.*

*Penner and Peel and their partners, and one or two other dancing couples come in and out of the room. While it is empty for a moment Lee comes back, wearing an overcoat, and goes out on to the verandah, where he is seen walking up and down. The dancing goes on.*

*Again the room is empty, and a Servant comes in from the door that Lee last used. He looks round, discovers Lee, and goes to him.*

*Servant.* Major Perrin has come from Washington to see you, sir.

*Lee.* Major Perrin ?

*Servant.* Yes, sir.

*Lee.* Bring him in here.

*Servant.* Yes, sir. *[He goes.*

*[Lee goes to the dancing-room, and speaks at the door.*

*Lee.* Do you mind if I close this door, my dear ?  
*There's a message from Washington.*

*Mrs Lee's voice.* Certainly.

*[He closes the door. The music is still heard beyond it. Lee takes off his overcoat and closes the verandah door. The Servant shows Perrin in.]*

*Lee.* Good-evening, Major.

*Perrin.* Good-evening, sir. This is from General Scott.

*Lee (taking letter).* Sit down, will you ?

*[Perrin sits, while Lee reads. The Servant brings in a drink on a tray, which Perrin takes. The Servant goes.]*

*Lee.* Are you going back to-night ?

*Perrin.* Yes, sir. My boat is waiting.

*Lee.* There seems to be some haste.

*Perrin.* I understand that Mr Lincoln wished it.

*Lee.* My letter is not yet written.

*Perrin.* General Scott authorised me to take a message, the letter to follow.

*Lee.* So he tells me. There was nothing else *(indicating the letter)* ?

*Perrin.* The General asked me to say informally that the army commanders to whom he has spoken to-day welcome the suggestion that you should be given control.

*Lee.* They are very considerate. But there's no belief that I shall come ?

*Perrin.* I can't say that, sir. I think everybody has great faith in your loyalty. Robert E. Lee

*Lee.* I, too, have faith in that.

*Perrin.* It's not for me to say anything more, sir.

*Lee.* My compliments to General Scott. My resignation will be in his hands by to-morrow at noon.

*Perrin (rising).* Yes, sir.

*Lee (ringing a bell).* Can I be of any assistance to you?

*Perrin.* Thank you, no, sir.

*[The Servant comes.]*

*Lee.* See that Major Perrin is conducted to his boat.

*Servant.* Yes, sir.

*[He goes with Perrin.]*

*[Lee puts on his overcoat again. After a pause, he opens the dance-room door, and looks in for a moment. Then he goes out again on to the verandah. As he walks up and down the Servant comes and puts out the lantern lights, leaving the clear night sky beyond. After a few moments the music stops and Duff Penner comes in from the dance-room. He hesitates, until he sees Lee passing on the verandah. As Lee comes back to the door he speaks.]*

Penner. Oh, we're just going. Good-night, Colonel Lee.

Lee (*at the verandah door*). Good-night, Duff. But it's not Colonel Lee any longer.

Penner. Not Colonel—— (*He stands for a moment, then turns back to the dance-room excitedly, and begins to speak to the people beyond.*) I say—— (*He checks himself. Then after a moment he goes up to Lee, and holds out his hand.*) Will you let me, sir? (*As Lee takes his hand.*) Lee of Virginia. (*He turns hurriedly and goes.*)

Lee (*after a pause, not moving*). Virginia.

#### THE SCENE CLOSES

#### SCENE IV

*Twilight on the evening of June 30th, 1862. The eve of the action at Malvern Hill, which closed the seven days' battle before Richmond.*

*At the approach to the hill, just outside the tent of General J. E. B. Stuart, the Commander of the Confederate cavalry.*

*To and fro from the tent at intervals passes Tom Buchanan, on sentry duty. Ray Warrenton, his hat off and his uniform coat open, lies asleep on*



the ground. Duff Penner, coatless, smoking a cigar, his banjo across his knees, is sitting close by him, his back against a hummock of turf. On a flat piece of rising ground a few yards away, David Peel is lying at full length on his stomach, rifle in hand, watching the distance. For a few moments there is silence, but for Buchanan's movement.

Robert E.  
Lee

Penner. Ray. [There is no answer.

Penner. Private Warrenton. [Still none.

Penner. Um. Nice sociable party this is. (*A pause.*) Anybody else tried to walk across the gap, David ?

Peel. You'll hear about it if they do. Don't talk.

Penner. I'm very much obliged, I'm sure. Have another cigar, Duff ? Thank you, Duff ; I will.

[He takes one from his pocket and lights it.

[Buchanan passes again.

I say, look here, Tom——

[Buchanan takes no notice and passes on.

Don't speak to the sentry—quite so. Thank you.

[Laughter comes from Stuart's tent.

Penner. Now why doesn't the General ask me to oblige him with another tune ? Jeb Stuart knows what's what about a banjo, I can tell you, David.

*Peel.* Don't talk.

*Penner.* There isn't much encouragement to, is there? I do think that after five days of it we might sit down together and be a bit easy. We might all be dead.

*Peel.* You will be directly if you don't stop talking.

*Penner.* We probably shall be to-morrow, anyway. That's a nice sort of a hill to go and assault, that is. If I were General Lee——

*Peel.* Well, you aren't. Be quiet.

*Penner.* No. Not General Lee. Be quiet, Duff. Finish mending your coat, Duff. Have a nice party all by yourself, Duff. (*He takes up his coat, and continues a sewing operation already begun.*)

[*Buchanan passes again.*]

*Penner.* Mending my coat, Tom.

[*Buchanan takes no notice, and goes.*]

Mending my coat, Duff. (*He goes on sewing for a few moments.*)

[*Then the report of Peel's rifle rings out.*]

*Penner starts violently, stabbing his finger with the needle. Warrenton turns over in his sleep.*

*Penner.* Oh, damn! Why didn't you tell me?

*Peel (attending to his rifle).* I wasn't thinking of you.

*Penner.* Nobody is thinking of me. What happened ? Robert E.  
Lee

*Peel.* That's the third.

*Penner.* Three out of three.

*Peel.* Nice occupation for a fine June evening, isn't it ?

*Penner.* Well, they should go to bed.

*Peel.* To bed. Yes.

*Penner.* It is pretty bloody.

*Peel.* Just. [*He resumes his vigil.*]

*Penner* (*biting off the cotton and inspecting his work*).  
Four good marks, privately awarded by myself.

[*Warrenton wakes up.*]

*Penner* (*putting on his coat*). Good-evening.

*Warrenton.* I've been to sleep.

*Penner.* For three hours.

*Warrenton* (*rubbing his eyes*). Where are we ?

*Penner.* Approaching Malvern Hill. Very unhealthy neighbourhood. Change here for death or glory.

*Warrenton.* I remember. [*Buchanan passes.*]  
I say, Duff, old man, that was a devil of a mess. Only this morning. It seems a year ago. I should never have got out if you hadn't turned up.

*Peel* (*over his shoulder*). He's to be promoted for it.

*Warrenton.* I'm so glad. You were splendid.

Penner. I'll take your word for it. I don't remember it myself.

*[Again there is laughter from Stuart's tent.]*

Warrenton. That's a good laugh after fourteen months of this sort of thing.

Penner. Old Jeb will laugh at his funeral.

Warrenton. Not so old. They say he's only thirty.

Penner. Well, he knows enough to be older.

Warrenton. Have you heard anything about to-morrow?

Penner. General Jackson is expected here in the morning.

Warrenton. Stonewall. Then we shall do it.

Penner. Tom said there was something about General Lee coming here to see old Jeb to-night.

Warrenton. He finds time to do everything.

Penner. I know. I wonder he doesn't send for old Jeb to go to him. If I were——

Peel. As I said——

Penner. Quite right, I'm not.

*[The laughter comes out of the tent, and in a moment General Stuart, familiarly Jeb, comes in accompanied by an Aide. Stuart is a young, heavily bearded man, splendid in looks and physique, sanguine]*

*and alive with a gay energy. He is at the moment in undress uniform, smoking a cigar, but marked with all the expansive elegance of the plumed and heavily spurred cavalier of the battlefield. He is the young cavalry leader loved by Lee, and probably the only man in the army who dares chaff Jackson.*

Robert E.  
Lee

*Stuart (to the Aide).* Wait for the General at Newington cross-roads. He may be there at any time now.

*The Aide (going).* Yes, sir.

*Stuart (to Warrenton, who, with Penner, is now standing).* Well, Warrenton, none the worse for this morning ?

*Warrenton.* No, sir, thank you.

*Stuart.* It was Penner here that got you out of that.

*Warrenton.* I know, sir.

*Stuart.* We shall hear more about it. A little promotion for the banjo. [*Buchanan passes.*]

*Penner.* That's very good of you, sir. But might I say something ?

*Stuart.* Yes, what is it ?

*Penner.* Promotion won't mean being moved, will it, sir ? You see, we four have been with you like this for six months now, and that's better

than commissions and all that sort of thing. We like being just outside your tent, so to speak, sir. It makes us feel like unofficial generals, if you understand, sir.

*Stuart.* You're good fellows. I don't want to lose any of you. I'll see to it, don't worry.

*Penner.* Thank you, sir. I should like just to forget about the promotion.

*Stuart.* What's been going on, Peel ?

*Peel (still on the look-out).* Two more since I saw you, sir.

*Stuart.* That ought to discourage them. You're a very special sort of a cavalryman, David.

*[As he speaks, the rifle goes again.]*

*Stuart (turning).* Again ?

*Peel.* Yes, sir.

*Stuart.* That should settle it. Let us have the banjo, Penner, while we're waiting. Not too loud, perhaps.

*Penner.* I'm much obliged to you, sir.

*[While Stuart walks to and fro, puffing his cigar, Penner plays and sings.]*

Nelly Bly ! Nelly Bly !

Bring de broom along.

We'll sweep de kitchen clean, my dear,

And hab a little song.

Poke de wood, my lady lub,  
And make de fire burn ;  
And while I take my banjo down,  
Just give de mush a turn.  
(*Chorus*) Heigh ! Nelly, ho ! Nelly,  
Listen, lub, to me,  
I'll sing to you, play to you  
A dulcem melody.

Nelly Bly shuts her eye  
When she goes to sleep.  
And when she wakens up again  
Her eyeballs 'gin to peep.  
De way she walks, she lifts her foot,  
And den she puts it down,  
And when it falls dere's music dar  
In dat part of de town.  
(*Chorus*) Heigh ! Nelly, ho ! Nelly,  
Listen, lub, to me,  
I'll sing to you, play to you  
A dulcem melody.

*Stuart.* Very good, very good. "In dat part of de town." So there is. Bless them. I should like to make General Jackson sing that.

*Penner.* Any time you wish, sir.

[*During the song Buchanan, now off duty, has joined the party, smoking a cigar.*

*Another sentry has taken his place.  
Night has now fallen, and they are in  
moonlight. The glow of the fire comes  
from the direction of Stuart's tent.*

*Stuart.* The General didn't say any definite time, Buchanan ?

*Buchanan.* About nightfall, sir, that was all.

*Stuart (humming to himself).*

And when it falls dere's music dar  
In dat part of de town.

*Penner (offering to play).* Would you like it again, sir ?

*Stuart.* No, thank you — here's the General coming. *[He goes to his tent.]*

*Buchanan.* Well, Duff, what about bed ?

*Penner.* Bed, did you say ? What's that ?

*Buchanan.* Sleep, then. We shan't be wanted again to-night.

*Warrenton.* But if we stay perhaps General Lee will speak to us.

*Penner.* I'm sure I shall be very glad for anyone to speak to me. You're an agreeable sentry, Tom, aren't you ?

*Peel.* Duff has become very well acquainted with himself this evening.

*Penner.* And he's better company than some.

*[Lee, now Commander-in-Chief of the Army]*



of Northern Virginia, comes in with Robert E.  
Stuart's Aide and his own. He wears a Lee  
light cloak. At the same moment Stuart  
returns, having put on his hat—very  
broad-brimmed with a large black plume—  
and his sword-belt.

Stuart. Good-evening, sir.

Lee. Good-evening, General.

Stuart. This way, sir.

Lee. I would rather stay outside. It's very hot  
to-night.

Stuart. Yes, sir.

Lee (*spreading his cloak on the ground, and sitting*).  
You've still got your young men, I see. Good-  
evening, Ray.

Warrenton. Good-evening, sir.

Lee. How's the banjo, Duff?

Penner. The General is being very kind to it,  
sir.

Lee. Oh, Tom, you took my pencil away this  
afternoon.

Buchanan. Did I, sir (*feeling in his pocket*)? So  
I did. I'm extremely sorry, sir. [*Gives it to Lee.*]

Lee. It's all right. Only my own staff will  
never let me keep one. They collect them, I  
imagine.

Lee's Aide. I'll speak about it, sir.

*Stuart.* Good-night. I shan't want you again.  
Four o'clock in the morning.

[*Buchanan, Penner, and Warrenton go, with*  
"Good-night, sir. Good-night, sir."

*Stuart (to the Aides).* You'll find some excellent  
peaches in the tent, gentlemen. [*The Aides go.*

*Lee.* Sit down, General.

*Stuart.* Thank you, sir. [*He sits beside Lee.*

*Lee.* Smoke if you want to.

*Stuart.* Thank you, sir. I do find it helpful.  
(*He lights a cigar.*) By the way, sir, I suppose we  
can count David Peel there as deaf ?

*Lee.* Hullo, David.

*Peel.* Good-evening, sir.

*Lee.* What's he doing ?

*Stuart.* They've been sending scouts across from  
Taylor's Farm all the evening, trying to see what's  
happening on our left. There's just one point  
where they miss cover. Peel's been watching it.

*Lee.* I see. We can leave him to it.

*Stuart.* Why didn't you send for me, sir ?

*Lee.* No—I wanted a walk. About to-morrow.

*Stuart.* Yes, sir.

*Lee.* Those people have a very strong position.  
We've driven them for a week, but there they are.  
They grow as you kill them. To take that hill  
to-morrow will be to send our men through

hell. But we shall get there. The question is whether we can destroy them. In any case we've saved Richmond—for a time. Is it for more than a time? That depends on to-morrow.

Robert E.  
Lee

*Stuart.* We must destroy them. What am I to do, sir?

*Lee.* You may not be there.

[*The Sentry passes.*]

*Stuart.* Not there, sir—but—

*Lee.* No. That's what I wanted to see you myself for. We depend more than anything else on having Jackson with us.

*Stuart.* Well, sir?

*Lee.* He's having great difficulty in getting through. I want you to go back, cross the river, get into touch with him, shepherd him into the field to-morrow. I can do without you, but I can't do without him.

*Stuart (reluctantly).* I understand, sir.

*Lee.* It's all right, Jeb, my boy. I wouldn't change my cavalry command for anything. But that's how cavalry can best serve us to-morrow. Get him here by noon if you can. We shan't be able to attack till late in the day, in any case.

*Stuart.* I would rather have died than not be in it, sir.

*Lee.* I know. But I must have Jackson there. Get him for me. Huger is in the centre, Magruder on the right. I want Jackson on the left by one o'clock—earlier if possible. Then when we've got them on the move you shall take it up.

*Stuart.* Very well, sir. I didn't think——

*Lee.* Don't fidget, Jeb. How are those eight new officers getting on ?

*Stuart.* They're pretty good officers, sir. In time they will be good soldiers, too. They only need reducing to the ranks.

*Lee.* When can you start ?

*Stuart.* I'll have orders given at once. We can be away by five in the morning. We should be in touch with General Jackson by eight.

*Lee.* How are rations ?

*Stuart.* Not too bad. Have you seen Mr Davis lately, sir ?

*Lee.* I shall be talking to him about it all in a day or two, I hope.

*Stuart.* By the way, sir, I hear to-day that Henson has executed four of my men.

*Lee.* That's too bad. I've warned them, three times. We must do it. Hang four of his to-morrow morning. It shall be in orders.

*Stuart.* It is a poor business, sir, that.

*Lee.* Why does he make me do it ? Why ? I

knew Henson at West Point. He was never to be trusted. It's shameful of him. Poor fellows.

Robert E.  
Lee

*Stuart.* Perhaps——

*Lee.* No. It's got to be done. It's dreadful, but it must.

*Stuart.* Yes, sir.

*Lee.* You are clear as to where to cross the river ?

*Stuart (rising).* Yes, sir. But I should like you to look at the map with me.

*[Another shot from Peel's rifle.]*

*Lee.* You've sharp eyes, David. Did he get by ?

*Peel.* No, sir. It's quite clear in the moon.

*Lee.* Come along, then.

*[He goes with Stuart towards the tent.]*

*Stuart (as he is going).* Penner ! Penner !

*Penner (in the distance).* Yes, sir.

*Stuart.* Sorry to wake you. I want to speak to you. Will you wait here.

*[He goes with Lee.]*

*[The Sentry passes.]*

*[A moment later Penner appears, half-awake, and hardly half-dressed.]*

*Penner.* What is it ?

*Peel.* I don't know.

*Penner.* People never want to talk at the right time, and they always want to talk at the wrong time. I was fast asleep.

*Peel.* You're lucky.

[*Lee with his Aide returns with Stuart.*

*Lee.* Very well, then. Report to me at the first possible moment. Good-night. Good-night.

*Stuart.* Good-night, sir.

*Peel and Penner.* Good-night, sir.

[*Lee and his Aide go.*

*Stuart (to Penner).* I want you and Warrenton to fetch Colonel Wright and Major Trelawny here at once.

*Penner.* Yes, sir. [*Stuart returns to his tent.*

*Penner.* That's one for Ray, anyhow. Look here, David, what's it all about ?

*Peel.* Don't ask me. But do you remember that day in the woods at Arlington ?

*Penner.* I do.

*Peel.* Well, I told Tom and Ray then.

*Penner.* What ?

*Peel.* This.

*Penner.* How, this ?

*Peel.* We've won battles for a year. We've won them every day for a week. We've beaten them and beaten them. And there they are.

*Penner.* There they are, certainly.

*Peel.* And they'll be there longer than we shall. That's all.

*Penner.* I say—you give me the shivers.

*Peel.* But we shall be a wonder of the world yet. Robert E. Lee  
Perhaps in the end we shall have only one thing left.

*Penner.* What's that ?

*Peel.* Robert E. Lee.

*Penner.* Perhaps. . . . I say, Ray . . . (*calling*).  
[*He goes.*]

[*Peel lifts his rifle, holds it at aim for a moment, then lowers it again without firing, and continues to watch.*]

#### THE SCENE CLOSES

#### SCENE V

*Early evening of the next day, July 1st, 1862.*

*An open space from which could be seen the action on Malvern Hill, which has been in progress some three hours. The sound of firing is continuous.*

*Lee is watching the action. With him is his Aide.*

*Lee (after a prolonged scrutiny of the field).* Hill can't go on doing that for ever. Go to Captain Parkes again—ask him if there's any news of General Jackson's advance yet.

*The Aide.* Yes, sir.

[*He goes.*]

[*After a moment Tom Buchanan comes on.*]

*Buchanan (saluting).* General Stuart is ready, sir.

*Lee.* Yes, I know, but we aren't. We can't move them, yet. Tell General Stuart to keep as near Long Spinney as he can with safety, and wait. He may have to wait most of the night.

*Buchanan (going).* Yes, sir.

*Lee.* Any news of Betty?

*Buchanan.* Yes, sir. I've got a son.

*Lee.* Splendid. Give her my love.

*Buchanan.* Thank you, sir.

[*He goes. The Aide returns.*]

*The Aide.* General Jackson is moving, sir. He expects to be in action within half an hour. He is coming up across us here.

*Lee.* Good. Now go down to Colonel Cooper. Tell him to take the Sixteenth and the Forty-Ninth up to support Magruder's right at once. And let the Tenth and Fourteenth be ready to follow.

*The Aide.* Yes, sir. Won't you eat something, sir ?

*Lee.* Oh, yes, thank you. I had forgotten.

[*The Aide goes, and Lee takes a small piece of bread and an apple from his pocket, and eats them. He walks up and down, eagerly watching the action. Then he takes another apple from his pocket.*]



Lee. Have an apple, Mason.

Robert E.

[*He throws it to a man a few yards away.* Lee

A Voice. Thank you, sir.

[*Still Lee moves about, then, suddenly—*

Lee. No, no, no. Come here, Mason.

[*Captain Mason comes on.*

Mason. Yes, sir.

Lee. Go along to Hurd's battery as quickly as you can. Tell them they must keep to the right of those trees, or they'll cut into Hill's advance. I warned them about it. Quickly.

Mason. Yes, sir. You ought to find some cover, sir. It's not safe here.

Lee. Go along, Mason, do as you are told. It's perfectly safe.

Mason. Yes, sir.

[*He turns to go, and falls dead at Lee's feet, shot through the heart.*

Lee (*kneeling over him*). Poor lad, poor lad.

[*Another officer, Captain Udall, runs on, and kneels beside him.*

Udall. He's dead. You must not stay here, sir.

Lee. Go down to Hurd's battery immediately. Tell them that if they don't keep their fire to the right of those trees they'll cut up Hill's advance.

Udall. Yes, sir. Do move, sir. We're just

getting them—it would be disastrous if anything happened——

*Lee.* Hurd's battery, Udall, at once. I'll move Mason.

*Udall.* Yes, sir. *[He goes.]*

*[Lee lifts Mason's dead body, and is about to carry it off, when Buchanan returns.]*

*Buchanan.* What is it, sir ?

*Lee.* Mason, poor fellow, killed.

*Buchanan.* Let me move him, sir.

*[Lee puts down the body, and Buchanan kneels by it.]*

*Buchanan.* General Stuart wants to know whether it would be possible for you to speak to him, sir.

*Lee.* How far is it ?

*Buchanan.* A four-minutes' gallop, sir.

*Lee.* Very well.

*Buchanan.* I'll put him under that tree. You shouldn't expose yourself like this, sir.

*Lee.* Look here, Tom, that's three of you. One would think this army's business was to look after me. It's mine to look after it, and myself.

*Buchanan.* But you can't look after it if you get shot, sir.

*Lee.* Don't argue. See to Mason, and then show me the way.

*Buchanan.* Yes, sir.

[*He carries Mason's body off.*

Robert E.

Lee

[*The Aide returns.*

*The Aide.* Colonel Cooper is moving into action now, sir. Major Hurd says he has your message. Captain Udall was killed as he gave it.

*Lee.* Udall, too. Bring the horses—I'm going to see General Stuart. Come with me.

*The Aide.* Yes, sir.

[*He goes.*

[*Buchanan returns.*

*Buchanan.* I think General Jackson is moving by here directly, sir.

[*His arm falls, broken by a shot.*

*Lee* (*supporting him*). Tom, my boy.

*Buchanan.* It's nothing, sir, really nothing. This way, sir.

[*He moves to go. A rifle shot is heard a few yards away, and a moment after David Peel comes on, rifle in hand, looking into the distance.*

*Peel.* It's just one man, sir. I've been watching his smoke for an hour. He won't do any more.

*Lee.* Tom is hit, David. Fetch a doctor, there's one just along there.

*Buchanan.* It isn't anything at all, sir.

*Peel.* Hurt, old man ?

*Buchanan.* No, David, nothing at all. Shall we go, sir ?

[*He faints. Peel catches him. He attends to him with a flask.*]

*Lee.* I'll look after him. Fetch the doctor.

*Buchanan (coming to).* It's all right, sir.

*Peel.* I'll take him along, sir.

[*He helps Buchanan off.*]

[*Lee watches the action again.*]

*Lee.* That's better. (*As though giving orders*)  
Keep it to the right—that's it—that's it.

[*The Aide comes in.*]

*The Aide.* The horses are ready, sir. General Jackson is just coming up the path.

*Lee.* What, by himself ?

*The Aide.* I think so, sir. One of General Ewell's brigades is passing along the road under us. I saw General Jackson dismount, and leave the road by himself.

[*Peel returns.*]

*Lee.* Where's Tom ?

*Peel.* The doctor is looking after him, sir. A broken arm, but not serious.

*Lee.* Go back to General Stuart, will you ? Say that I was coming, but that General Jackson is here, and if he can possibly come up to see me, will he do so ? If not, I will be with him in half an hour.

*Peel.* Yes, sir.

[*He goes.* Robert E.

*Lee.* What's that moving down there, by the Lee  
barn.

*The Aide.* I think it's Hurd's battery moving forward, sir.

*Lee.* That's it. That means that McClellan is moving too. He'll be in retreat before dark, but he's going to get away, he's going to get away.

*The Aide.* But Richmond is safe, sir.

*Lee.* If we could have destroyed him. . . . Did you take my message to General Whiting this morning about Denison ?

*The Aide.* Yes, sir.

*Lee.* What did he say ?

*The Aide.* He said, all right, sir. But Major Denison, I gathered, had been heard to criticise you, sir.

*Lee.* It's not what he thinks of me, but what I think of him. Has he been put in command of Whiting's scouts ?

*The Aide.* Yes, sir. General Whiting gave the order while I was there.

*Lee.* There go Ewell's men. If Hill can hold out for five minutes. It's a terrible place to cross. They're doing it—yes, yes. Now if Whiting can come in from the left.

*The Aide.* Here's General Jackson coming, sir.

[General Jackson, "Stonewall," comes in, scanning the field as he walks. The fighting Puritan of the army, with ragged beard, and iron visionary eyes, he wears no arms, and has his hat in his hands behind him.

*Lee.* General.

*Jackson* (putting his hat on and saluting). I didn't know you were here, sir.

*Lee.* You managed to get through.

*Jackson.* I was held up twenty times. But I got here, with the help of Stuart.

*Lee.* Ewell looks like getting up to Hill in a minute. Where's Whiting?

*Jackson.* I think he'll join Hill's left almost at once. I sent up one of my own brigades to him from reserve. There's just one gap—about two hundred yards. It begins just there—beyond that foot-bridge. I left Hewitt with the Third Carolinians to get across to it. If we fill that, Whiting and Hill will be in touch. But it's a bad place to get to.

*Lee.* I don't see any movement there.

*Jackson.* No. I don't like it.

*Lee.* If we can't destroy McClellan to-night, if he gets away, it means beginning all over again.

*Jackson.* I know, sir.

Lee. Ewell is right through now. What's happening to Hewitt ?

Robert E.  
Lee

Jackson. I must go back and see for myself.

*[Colonel Hewitt, covered with the marks of action, hatless and gripping the bladeless hilt of a sword, comes in. He salutes.]*

Jackson. Hewitt ! What are you doing here, man ?

Hewitt. It's no good, sir. I can't get across. I've sent them twice, and led them twice. Every yard of the ground is swept.

Jackson. You must get across.

Lee. The whole line depends on it, Colonel.

Hewitt. Half my Carolinians are killed already.

Jackson. Get across with the other half. Don't stop, go on till there's not a man standing. That gap has got to be closed. There's no one else to close it.

Hewitt. It's annihilation, sir. Nothing can live there.

Jackson. Colonel, I always endeavour to take care of my wounded, and to bury my dead. You have heard my order—obey it.

Hewitt. Yes, sir. *[He salutes and goes.]*

Lee. Hewitt is a good fellow.

Jackson. Not if he doesn't fill that gap, sir.

Lee. It's a beautiful line now—look at it.

Magruder is well round on the right. Huger is touching Ewell—Hill—that little blank—Whiting.

*Jackson.* It shall be filled. *[He turns to go.]*

*Lee.* Where are you going ?

*Jackson.* I'll take them across it myself.

*Lee.* You mustn't.

*Jackson.* I must, sir.

*Lee.* General Jackson !

*Jackson.* Very well, sir—but——

*Lee.* If any man can get them across, Hewitt can. To lose you would be to lose my right arm, Jackson. Go and do what you can—but not that. Promise me.

*Jackson.* All right, sir. *[He goes.]*

*Lee.* That's clever of McClellan—look—he's moving men down to that gap. He'll cut Whiting off if Hewitt doesn't get over.

*The Aide.* I suppose there's no possible support to send Hewitt, sir ?

*Lee.* None. *[Peel returns.]*

*Peel.* General Stuart will be here at once, sir.

*Lee.* You've got good eyes, David. Can you see past that foot-bridge ?

*Peel.* Yes, sir. It's open. General Whiting is beyond it, I think, sir.

*Lee.* That is so. You see the enemy there moving towards the open place ?



Peel. Yes, sir.

Robert E.

Lee. Is there anybody moving in front of Lee  
them ?

Peel (*after a moment*). Yes—a scout there in  
those trees—two, I think.

Lee. You can't reach them ?

Peel. Not from here, sir.

Lee. Could you get near enough ?

Peel. I'll try, sir.

Lee. Yes, do.

[*Peel very cautiously starts off on his mission.*]

The Aide. Even if Hewitt fails, McClellan is  
bound to retreat now, isn't he, sir ?

Lee. Yes—but he could hold out then till it's  
dark, and he would get clear away to James's River.

[*General Stuart arrives.*]

Lee. Good-evening, General.

Stuart. Good-evening, sir.

Lee. You brought him through all right.

Stuart. Yes, sir.

Lee. It was very well done. You wanted to see  
me ?

Stuart. Couldn't I move out beyond General  
Whiting now, sir ? I'm sure I could drive their  
right in on to our centre.

Lee. That's just what you couldn't do, Jeb.  
They've got earthworks on their right that would

defeat all the cavalry in the world. I've seen them, and I know.

*Stuart.* You've seen them, sir ?

*Lee.* Yes, last night.

*Stuart.* You tell us to be careful, sir, and you set us a very bad example.

*Lee.* Well, you can't move until they do. We can't get round them, we've got to go through them, or after them.

*Stuart.* Of course, if you say so, sir. I'm tired of sitting and looking on. And they've put a bullet through Penner's banjo. That doesn't make things any more cheerful.

*Lee.* What's that happening there ?

*The Aide.* It's the Carolinians, sir. Hewitt is trying to get by on this side of the bridge. It's shorter, but it must be even worse.

*Lee.* He's splendid. He's going to do it.

*Stuart.* Look here, sir, I can't stand this. For God's sake, let me do something.

*Lee.* Wait here. I'll tell you when you can go.  
[*Jackson comes back hurriedly.*]

*Jackson.* You see, sir ?—Hewitt is almost through. Give me back my word, sir—I could get them over, I'm sure of it.

*Lee.* If you people don't be quiet, I'll put you under arrest. Leave Hewitt alone. (*To the Aide*)

Go to General Huger—tell him to drive their left back, round on Magruder if he can. Tell him not to mind getting out of touch with Ewell now—they can't spare any men from their centre to do any harm there. (*The Aide goes.*) That's good—one more drive—I told you, Jackson.

*Stuart.* He hasn't more than a couple of hundred men left.

*Jackson.* They'll be enough to hold it if they get there.

*Lee.* He's through—— Oh! that's too bad.

*Stuart.* He's down.

*Jackson.* I must go, sir, I must. I told you. They'll break—they are breaking.

*Lee.* You could do no more than he has done.

*Stuart.* They are coming back—hardly a hundred of them.

*Jackson.* We must go again. I've still got my own Fifty-Third, sir. They're worn out, but they'll go with me. Let me take them, sir.

*Lee.* It's too late now—it will be dark in ten minutes. Somebody is fetching Hewitt. That's brave of him. No, Jackson, time has beaten us. If we could have attacked this morning we might have destroyed them in spite of all.

*Jackson.* I'm sorry, sir.

*Lee.* It wasn't your fault. If it had been in

human power for you to have got here last night, you would have done it. I know that. We've beaten them, but they will get away—enough of them to give us no rest. Look, though, they're retreating. Yes, surely—yes, from their centre to their left. Huger has driven their left in, and it's taken the centre with it. Now then, Jeb, boy, you can go. It's a clear road for you now—straight up the front slope. Do all you can.

*Stuart.* Yes, sir.

*[He goes, and is heard mounting and riding away.]*

*[The Aide returns.]*

*The Aide.* General Huger was expecting your order, sir.

*[Buchanan comes in, his arm in a splint.]*

*Buchanan.* I'm all right now, sir. Can you use me?

*Lee.* No, Tom. Sit down and rest.

*Buchanan.* I really don't need it, sir.

*Lee.* Will nobody obey me? Sit down.

*Buchanan.* Couldn't I go back to General Stuart, sir?

*Lee.* General Stuart will be in pursuit of the enemy in a few minutes.

*Buchanan.* Then I really ought to be with him, sir.

*Lee.* Don't be foolish, and for the last time, sit down. I'll find something for you to do presently. The doctor should have kept you. Robert E. Lee

*[Buchanan, unconvinced, sits down on the ground and nurses his arm.]*

*Lee.* Their right is moving back too.

*Jackson.* If Whiting knows, he can get in now. But he can't see through earthworks.

*Lee (to the Aide).* Ride for all you are worth—let Whiting know that he can get through.

*The Aide (going).* Yes, sir.

*Jackson.* I'll go up myself, sir.

*Lee.* Yes, do. Report to me in the morning.

*Jackson.* Yes, sir.

*[As Jackson is going, he meets Peel, half-supporting and half-carrying Colonel Hewitt.]*

*Peel.* He insisted on being brought to you, sir. It's the lung, sir.

*Hewitt.* I'm sorry, General. I nearly did it. I—I—

*Jackson.* You were magnificent, Colonel. I had to send you.

*Hewitt.* I know, sir. I nearly did it. If they had—given—me—another—I nearly—tell General Lee—

*[He dies.]*

*Jackson (to Lee—after a moment's pause).* You're right, sir—I couldn't have done it as well.

*[He salutes and goes.]*

*Lee.* David, you're a very gallant boy.

*Peel.* I got them both, sir. It kept the gap clear, I think. But there—it wasn't any use.

*Lee.* That's not for you to judge, David. But I meant bringing Colonel Hewitt in.

*Peel.* Anyone would have done that, sir.

*[The Aide returns.]*

*The Aide.* I was able to signal up, sir.

*Lee.* Very well. We'll move our quarters up the hill. See that bearers are sent for Colonel Hewitt. David, you had better follow General Stuart—he is advancing at once. Tom, stay with me. *(To the Aide)* Go and tell them—I want to walk along here a little way. I'll join you directly.

*[The Aide goes in one direction, Lee in the other. It is now nearly dark. All the firing has ceased.]*

*Peel.* For six months he has waited for this—and now——

*Buchanan.* They must have lost thousands, though, to-day.

*Peel.* There are thousands more to come. I must go.

*Buchanan.* I ought to come with you.

Peel. Of course you can't. I'm so glad about Robert E. Betty. Lee

Buchanan. Yes. [Peel goes.

[A moment later the Aide returns, carrying a lantern. He places it by Hewitt's body.

The Aide. Will you come with me? The General didn't wish us to wait.

Buchanan. Yes. [They go.

[A few moments later Lee comes back. Covering his face with his hand, for a little time he stands by Hewitt's body. Then he takes off his cloak, and places it over the dead man. After a pause again,

Lee (speaking slowly). Have mercy upon us.

[He follows Buchanan and the Aide.

THE SCENE CLOSES

## SCENE VI

The early evening of Sunday, May 10th, 1863.

The room of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, at the Confederate White House, Richmond, Virginia.

The window of the room is open to clusters of spring



*blossom. From the far distance comes the sound of church bells.*

*Jefferson Davis is sitting at the table with a Secretary.*

*Davis.* General Lee is late.

*Secretary.* Hardly, Mr President. He couldn't arrive in Richmond before five. It's only six now.

*Davis.* Yes, well—that will do. See that the Kentucky proclamation is sent off to-night. Did you ask whether there was any more news of General Jackson ?

*Secretary.* Nothing had come through this afternoon.

*Davis.* You are sure that General Lee got my letter before he started ?

*Secretary.* Yes, sir. Mason telegraphed that it had been delivered.

*Davis.* He knows I can't do it. I wish he wouldn't ask it.

*Secretary (deferentially).* A great many people seem to think it is the right time, sir.

*Davis.* A great many people think a great deal more than is good for them. Bring General Lee in directly he comes. And please tell Mrs Davis that I shan't be able to go to church this evening.

*[The Secretary goes. Davis arranges some*



*papers on his table, and then going to the window stands looking out. After a moment or two he calls to someone below.*

Robert E.  
Lee

*Davis.* Are you better, Captain ?

*A Voice.* Yes, thank you, Mr President. I'm going back to-morrow.

*[Davis waves a hand to him, and returns to his table, where he begins to write. The Secretary returns.]*

*Secretary (at the door).* General Lee, sir.

*[Lee comes in. The Secretary goes.]*

*Davis (rising and shaking hands).* Good-evening, General.

*Lee.* Good-evening, Mr President.

*Davis.* Sit down, will you ? *[They sit.]*

*Davis.* You got my letter ?

*Lee.* Yes, Mr President.

*Davis.* Yes, I'm glad you got it. I hope I was clear.

*Lee.* It is not for me to question your judgment. You are in a better position than I to see this matter clearly, I am sure. But I thought it necessary to tell you again just what I felt.

*Davis.* You are anxious, of course—we all are. But I suggest that anxiety may be indulged too freely.

*Lee.* As you will, Mr President. I know very

well that my place is to command the army in the field. But I cannot avoid thinking. How far, I must ask myself, will the resources of that army take us ?

*Davis.* It has been suggested—by some, shall we say responsible, journals ?—that you should be given entire control, both of the army and of policy.

*Lee.* You know very well that such proposals are foolish, and cause me nothing but distress. I am very sensible of the consideration that you give always to my views. I cannot ask, nor do I wish, for more than that. Further, I see very clearly that our troubles at all times have but one cause. If I had been able to secure the destruction of the enemy, we should now have no difficulties. I have not been able to do so. In the circumstances, if anyone should be removed, it should be the military commander.

*Davis.* I beg you will not say these things. Your successes are the pride and the only assurance of us all. Now again. Nothing has been so decisive as Chancellorsville.

*Lee.* Not decisive, Mr President. We did well, I know, but it was not decisive. That is just it. We win battles, constantly, but we get no nearer to a decision. That is why I raised this question

again. You can appear now at the head of a victorious army. It seems to me to be opportune.

*Davis.* As I told you in my letter, reunion with the North is to me unthinkable.

*Lee.* I know you feel that, Mr President. Perhaps you would wish me to say no more ?

*Davis.* No, no—please do not suggest that I am not open to argument—from the proper quarter. Say what you will.

*Lee.* It is only that. We have followed up a year's work, from our defence of Richmond, with Chancellorsville. We have never done better. Hooker is defeated. The North has probably never felt the strain so severely as it does at this moment. We might make proposals with great authority now.

*Davis.* The only proposal I will make is for unconditional peace. Will Mr Lincoln accept that, do you suppose ?

*Lee.* Might not the terms be discussed when the proposals in general have been made ? It may well be that our lead would persuade them to do all that we asked.

*Davis.* So long as I am President of these Confederate States I will consent to nothing but a plain assertion from the first. Washington drove us

out of the Union. Very well, we will stay out, on our own terms.

*Lee.* They, of course, do not admit that.

*Davis.* Do you think they need your advocacy, General Lee ?

*Lee.* Mr President——

*Davis.* No, no—I beg your pardon. Oh—I know you think I'm very short-sighted.

*Lee.* Indeed, I think nothing of the sort. I desire exactly what you desire. But I must consider the possibilities of getting it. If I did not advise you from my knowledge of the army, I should fail in my duty.

*Davis.* But the army isn't going to fall to pieces, is it ?

*Lee.* Supplies have already begun to be very irregular.

*Davis.* What is the good of telling me that—I'm doing everything I can.

*Lee.* But the people as a whole are not doing everything they can. I don't think you can insist upon that too often or too strongly, Mr President. We have been through more than two years now. Last winter, even, we had none too much of clothes or food. In less than six months winter will be here again. The north grows stronger every week. Do we ?

*Davis.* I tell you, I won't accept the only terms that I know they would give—reunion. Robert E. Lee

*Lee.* Very well, sir. We must go on.

*Davis.* Is General Jackson's condition serious?

*Lee.* I'm afraid he will be off duty for a long time. I could have spared any man better.

*Davis (his mind fixed on the one subject).* Why, only yesterday I had a report from one of our men at Washington. Mr Lincoln had been heard to say when he was told of Chancellorsville, that it made no difference—unconditional surrender was all that he would listen to now or at any time. You'll find that he will declare for Abolition directly. He's stubborn.

*Lee.* Isn't that all the more reason——

*Davis.* No. We're stubborn too.

[*A knock at the door.*

*Davis.* Yes? [*The Secretary comes in.*

*Secretary.* A telegram for General Lee.

[*He gives it to him and goes.*

*Lee (reading).* Oh—no, no.

*Davis.* What is it?

*Lee.* Jackson is dying. No, no, he can't.

*Davis (taking the telegram).* I didn't know it was that.

*Lee.* But they said all danger was gone. It was

just an arm. He can't be dying—he can't. My man Jackson.

*Davis.* Where is he ?

*Lee.* By Guinea Station, below Spottsylvania. It's four hours away. I—I should like to see him.

*Davis.* You would hardly get there to-night.

*Lee.* But I ought to go. Jackson—he mustn't, he mustn't.

*Davis.* It would be a heavy loss. Any recommendation you may make, General——

*Lee.* Recommendation—yes. We must go on. I understand.

*Davis.* And I ask you not to allow these political considerations to hamper you. We stand for the honour of the South. It can be vindicated only by our complete success, or our destruction.

*Lee (rising—his mind at Guinea Station).* For the honour of the South, Mr President. I am not unmindful of it. It should have been my life. He is a better man than I, abler to serve you.

*Davis (rising).* He is a great man, and you are generous. But you alone could not be replaced, General.

*Lee.* You don't know Jackson, Mr President, not as I do. I must go to him.

[*He moves to go. A knock again at the door.*]

*Davis.* Yes. [The Secretary comes in.]

*Secretary.* Another telegram for General Lee, Robert E. sir. *[He gives it to Lee, and goes.]* Lee

*Lee (reading).* He is dead. Good-night, Mr President. I return in the morning. Your information as to my movements is clear ?

*Davis.* Yes. Good-night, General. I'll do all that I can about supplies.

*Lee.* If you please. My men complain very little. *[He goes.]*

*[The church bells are still ringing, and far off is heard a regiment marching to the tune of "Dixie."]*

*[Davis stands still for a moment, then goes to the window and shuts it, returns to his table and resumes his writing.]*

#### THE SCENE CLOSES

#### SCENE VII

*Again a year later. Six o'clock on the morning of May 12th, 1864.*

*A room in a small farmhouse, Lee's Headquarters during the battles round Spottsylvania Court House.*

*Lee's Aide—of the Malvern Hill battle—and Tom*

*Buchanan, now a Captain on Lee's staff, are sitting at a table, maps and papers before them. On a wooden bench, roughly improvised as a bed, Ray Warrenton lies asleep, a bandage round his head. The men's uniforms are worn, and the room is bare, the door is off its hinges, there are signs of shattered crockery, and torn curtains droop over a broken window.*

*The Aide.* It means retreating.

*Buchanan.* I'm afraid so.

*The Aide.* If they can hold out at Richmond, the General means to get down to Petersburg, I think.

*Buchanan.* We ought to be able to hold that, for a time.

*The Aide.* For a time.

*Buchanan.* Grant must have lost over twenty thousand men in the last week. But it doesn't seem to make any difference to him.

*The Aide.* The General is worn out. Ought I to wake him? He said two hours.

*Buchanan.* I should give him a few minutes longer.

*Warrenton (waking—rather dazed).* I say, this is uncommonly good of you, Tom—Captain.

*Buchanan.* Feel rested, old man?



*Warrenton.* Oh, I'm all right. Funny thing, I've been dreaming about Stonewall Jackson.

Robert E.  
Lee

*Buchanan.* It's a year and two days since he died.

*Warrenton.* I know. I dreamt about him, and a river—you remember, that was the last thing he said—"No, no, let us pass over the river, and rest under the shade of the trees."

*Buchanan.* Yes, I remember.

*Warrenton.* Well, the river was there, and the trees too, and he was talking to somebody.

*The Aide.* You were probably thinking about him yesterday. You are tired.

*Buchanan.* Is your head hurting?

*Warrenton.* Not much.

*The Aide.* Try to sleep again. There'll be a bed for you presently. You had a rough day.

*Warrenton.* No—I mustn't go to sleep. General Lee may want me.

*Buchanan.* He won't want you to-day. You ought to sleep.

*Warrenton.* By Jove—I know now who it was that he was talking to. It was old Jeb. That's queer, isn't it? Old Jeb. Let me see—where is he?

*Buchanan.* He's gone down to Yellow Tavern with three brigades to keep Sheridan out of Richmond if he can.

*Warrenton.* Why aren't I with him ?

*The Aide.* You had to get through to Stamford—you know. Do go to sleep, there's a good fellow.

*Buchanan* (going to him and moving his pillow). Yes, Ray, do. The doctor says there's nothing to worry about. You'll be all right after a rest.

*Warrenton.* Yes, that's nothing. But old Jeb—under the trees—that's who it was with Stonewall.

[*He drops off asleep again.*

[*Buchanan goes back to his seat.*

*The Aide.* I think I had better tell the General.

[*He goes to a door leading to another room.*

*The Aide.* Are you awake, sir ?

*Lee* (inside). Yes, yes.

*The Aide.* It's half-past six, sir.

*Lee.* Oh, yes, thank you.

[*The Aide returns to his place, and a moment later Lee comes in. He is tired, rather ill.*

*Lee.* How is Warrenton ?

*Buchanan.* Rather restless, sir. But I don't think it's anything serious. A little dazed still.

*The Aide.* Do you think he might use your bed for an hour or two, sir ?

*Lee.* Of course—why didn't you suggest it before? I could have done very well here. It was careless of me.

*Buchanan* (going to Warrenton). Ray—Ray.

*Warrenton (waking).* Yes—what is it ?

Robert E.

*Buchanan.* There's a bed for you. You will be  
more comfortable. Lee

*[Helped by Buchanan, Warrenton stands up.  
His clothes are ragged and threadbare, his  
boots worn and broken.]*

*Warrenton.* I'm very sorry about that paper,  
General—I can't think how——

*Lee.* That's all right, my boy. You told me all  
I wanted to know.

*Warrenton.* I can't remember—you know the  
Warrentons always——

*Lee.* There's nothing to be troubled about at  
all, Ray. You must have a good sleep.

*Warrenton.* But that was a funny dream I had—  
it was old Jeb—— You must look after him, sir.

*Buchanan.* Come along, Ray, you must lie  
down.

*Warrenton.* It's very good of you to take so much  
trouble.

*[He goes out, Buchanan supporting him.]*

*Lee.* It was a terrible strain for him, poor fellow.  
It was fine of him. Everybody is fine. I wish we  
could do something more for him. Isn't there a  
little of that jelly left ?

*The Aide.* I'm afraid there's been none for a  
week, sir.

Lee. No.

[*Buchanan returns. Lee sits at the table.*]

Lee. Is there any word from General Stuart yet ?

*Buchanan.* No, sir, I asked ten minutes ago. The field wire still isn't working. I'm afraid it's cut.

*The Aide.* Thorpe went out with four men to see if they could trace it yesterday evening. They got a message through eight miles down, and that's the last we've heard of them.

Lee. One of Sheridan's pickets, eh ?

*The Aide.* I expect so, sir. I've sent out again this morning, but we've heard nothing.

Lee. Anything from Richmond ?

*The Aide.* They were all right an hour ago. They thought General Stuart had held Sheridan up. It had given them time, and they seemed hopeful.

*Buchanan.* Couldn't you rest for another hour or two, sir ? General Grant won't be able to attack again until midday in any case. Everything you ordered has been done, sir. You really need it.

Lee. No, I must go and see Ewell before Grant strikes. It's too much to ask of him, too much. But it must be. How many men has he ?

*The Aide.* Allowing for the loss of General

Johnson's division, between eight and ten thousand all told, sir. Robert E. Lee

*Lee.* And Grant can use forty thousand at least there. It's more than any man can do.

*Buchanan.* I was talking to Pearson last night, sir. He says General Ewell is very troubled about it—the Johnson disaster is a great blow to him. He thinks he may be destroyed altogether to-day.

*Lee.* I know, I know. Petersburg is our only hope—siege—and then—— (*To the Aide*) Write this to the President.

[*The Aide writes. Buchanan works at his papers.*]

*Lee (dictating).* “His Excellency President Davis. Mr President, I have the honour again to bring to your notice the extremely precarious condition of our army in the field. Repeated assaults upon our lines by General Grant with a force at least twice as large as our own, has failed to break either the resistance or the determination of our men. But this cannot continue. Ewell, for example, who has been in action for five days against a continually reinforced enemy, will have this morning to meet a fresh attack in which he will be outnumbered by four to one. I have no men that I can move from any other part of the line to help him. We have further to consider that a strong Federal force is

moving up the Valley of Virginia under Hunter. We can there make no opposition. In addition to Sheridan's threatened raid upon Richmond, Butler with some thirty thousand troops is moving, almost as he will, in the same direction. In the west Johnston's resistance to Sherman is weakening daily, as it must do. And I see no prospect of anything but increasing difficulty. In the circumstances I must again press the advisability of withdrawing our forces into the Petersburg defences. We could hold out there for a considerable time—long enough, I hope, to enable Your Excellency to make what proposals you may think fit. But in the open field I can no longer look for any favourable results. I do not wish to call upon a devotion and heroism, which have never been excelled, for one moment after there has ceased to be a reasonable hope of their being rewarded by victory in the end. Unless, therefore, Your Excellency has some reason which I have overlooked to urge against such a course, I propose to withdraw this army to Petersburg as soon as I can do so. I have the honour to be, with high respect, Your obedient servant . . .” . . . I would have died rather than write it. There, Tom, my boy, you see I have failed.

*[The Aide begins to transcribe the letter.]*

*Buchanan.* You haven't, sir—not a man in the

world will think it. You have given our South a name for ever.

Robert E.  
Lee

*Lee.* No—it is you—all of you—that have done that. Virginia trusted me—they all did—and I was not good enough. But there—I must not talk like this. We must go on, right to the end. Don't remember anything that I have said. I must go now to Ewell.

*[Mrs Meadows, a hale but now hungry old housewife, comes in, carrying a tray with three cups of soup on it.]*

*Mrs Meadows.* It's thin, sir, but it's hot.

*Lee.* It's very kind of you, Mrs Meadows.

*Mrs Meadows.* It isn't kind at all, sir.

*[Lee takes his cup, and Buchanan and the Aide theirs. They drink, and Lee is about to do the same.]*

*Lee.* There is a sick man in there, Mrs Meadows. You must keep this for him.

*Mrs Meadows.* Indeed no, sir—there's another cup.

*Lee.* And what are you having for breakfast yourself?

*Mrs Meadows.* There's plenty of breakfast for me, sir. I never was much of a one for breakfast.

*Lee* (*placing his saucer on top of his cup*). Tom, take this to Warrenton, please.



*Buchanan.* Please, sir——

*Lee.* Now, now—I want to feel like a hero, you know.

*Buchanan.* But really, sir——

*Mrs Meadows.* There is——

*The Aide.* I wish you would let——

*Lee (in humorous authority).* Captain Buchanan.

*Buchanan.* Very well, sir.

[*He goes with Lee's cup into the other room.*]

*Mrs Meadows.* But you must have some breakfast, sir.

*Lee.* Not every day.

*Mrs Meadows.* You ought to have some to-day. You're not well, sir, anyone can see that.

*Lee (shepherding her away).* I really don't need anything this morning.

*Mrs Meadows.* There's an egg, sir, for your dinner.

*Lee.* Thank you.

*Mrs Meadows.* You'll promise about that ?

*Lee.* Yes, when I come back.

[*She goes, pacified. Buchanan returns, and goes on with his work.*]

*Lee (to the Aide).* Get that letter through at once. No, send it by telegraph. I should be back in an hour. I'll take Miller with me.

[*He is going ; he is met at the door by David*]



*Peel, unshaven, his clothes derelict, and in a state of extreme exhaustion.*

Robert E.  
Lee

*Peel.* Good-morning, sir.

*Lee.* David—what's this ?

*Peel.* The wire broke down at midnight, sir. They must have cut it. Our wire into Richmond was out of action, too, and they had cut our right off from the city itself. So they had to send me direct to you. I left at one o'clock. I should have been here before, sir, but I had to go round by Bampton to keep clear of them.

*Lee.* What's the news ?

*Peel.* Good and bad, sir. We've held General Sheridan up for three days. I think Richmond can keep him out now.

*Lee.* Yes——

*Peel.* But General Stuart is killed, sir.

*Lee.* Stuart—— ?

*Peel.* Yes, sir—he's dead. He was hit yesterday evening at Yellow Tavern. He died at half-past twelve this morning.

*Lee.* Stuart—gone. (*He pauses for a moment.*) You must rest, David. (*To the others*) I'm going to Ewell.

[*He goes out. The Aide collects his papers and goes to send his telegram.*]

*Buchanan.* Jeb Stuart.

*Peel.* He was magnificent, Tom. Right in the thick of it all the time. We implored him, but he wouldn't take any notice. Tom, the end is coming.

*Buchanan.* Have you had any food ?

*Peel.* I got my ration before I started.

*Buchanan.* I'm afraid we——

*Peel.* That's all right. I'll see if I can sleep a little. *[He sits on the bench.]*

*Buchanan.* Did old Jeb suffer much ?

*Peel.* He was unconscious most of the time. All he asked for was Duff.

*Buchanan.* The banjo ?

*Peel.* Yes. What a man to love.

*Buchanan.* Do you remember that day before Richmond, two years ago ?

*Peel.* Yes.

*Buchanan* (*reconstructing with his finger*). Out of the works, round to the back of them, and then clean through into Richmond again.

*Peel.* He's dead.

*Buchanan.* We've got to get into Petersburg. Ray is in there—he's been badly shaken up.

*Peel.* Petersburg—and then. Well, there's no more wondering.

*[Warrenton appears at the door.]*

*Warrenton.* Hullo, David——

*Buchanan.* You must keep still, Ray——

*Warrenton.* No—I must find old Jeb—he’s in danger—have you seen him, David ?

Robert E.  
Lee

*Peel.* Yes, Ray, I’ve just come from Yellow Tavern.

*Warrenton.* You should have stayed to look after him. . . . Oh, I see—he is really with Stonewall.

*Buchanan.* Do go and lie down, Ray.

*Warrenton.* Yes, I shan’t see him any more.

[*He goes back.*]

*Buchanan.* There’s nowhere to move him to yet.

*Peel.* The General seems worn out, too.

*Buchanan.* The greatest heart in the world, and it’s pretty near breaking.

[*The Aide comes in.*]

*The Aide.* What’s to be done—word has just come from Ewell that he has had to engage already. If the chief finds him in action nothing will keep him out of it—he’s desperate.

*Buchanan.* I’ll see if I can catch him—he wouldn’t be going fast. He would probably come back to direct Rodes. As long as he doesn’t get there and see it——

[*Lee comes in hurriedly.*]

*Lee.* General Ewell is in action—I picked the message up. Miller has gone on. Let General Rodes know that I want him to move in from the

left to the centre in fifteen minutes' time. And send the Fourth and Ninth Batteries down to General Ewell's right at once. They must keep him from being cut off at any cost.

*The Aide.* Yes, sir.

[*The Aide goes.*

*Lee.* At any cost.

[*The Aide is heard speaking outside, and returns.*

*The Aide.* General Ewell is wounded, sir.

*Lee.* Take these orders. Captain Buchanan, come with me.

*The Aide.* Shall I find you here, sir ?

*Lee.* Not for a time. I shall take over General Ewell's command myself. There is nothing more for me to do now.

*Buchanan.* But there is everything for you to do, sir. If we lost you——

*Lee.* Those orders, please.

[*The Aide goes.*

*Lee.* Come.

*Peel.* Please, sir, you mustn't, you mustn't. You let me speak to you that night at Arlington. Let me speak again, now. You mustn't go. It isn't brave to die now, sir. We all want to die in these days. The South is dying. There is nobody to save us but you. You must keep the South alive, sir, for the years to come. We all know we

can't win now. But we haven't lost our courage. And we want you to use it, sir—not to die for it, but to live for it, so that when the end comes, we may be able to follow you still. To die would be to give in, sir.

*Lee (pausing).* You are right, David. We will go on to the end, together. Now go to sleep.

*[Peel lies down on the bench.]*

*Lee (to Buchanan).* Let me see that map of the Petersburg road.

*[He sits as Buchanan, standing beside him, places the map before him.]*

*Lee.* Gordon must cover the withdrawal of the left and centre—— *[The Aide comes back.]*

*The Aide.* I've sent your orders through, sir. General Ewell's wound is slight.

*Lee.* Let General Ewell know that I shall be there in twenty minutes. *[The Aide goes.]*

*Lee (to Peel, who turns to him).* It's all right—I've promised. *(To Buchanan, at the map again)* It may be as much as ten days before we move. But in the meantime see that the roads east and west of Cold Harbor are . . .

THE SCENE CLOSES

## SCENE VIII

*Jefferson Davis's room at Richmond. An afternoon early in February, 1865. Outside is a white, frost-bound world.*

*Davis—a very tired man—and his Secretary are at the table.*

*Secretary.* I think that's all, sir.

*Davis.* Yes, that's all—all.

*Secretary.* We might bring it up to fifteen thousand in six weeks' time.

*Davis.* Fifteen—Grant alone has a hundred and twenty. We shall have to leave Richmond—they can't hold Petersburg long now.

*Secretary.* I'm afraid not, sir. I expect that is what Captain Buchanan is coming to say.

*Davis.* We must try to join General Johnston.

*Secretary.* General Lee will move to the West, I suppose.

*Davis.* I ought to have resigned six months ago.

*Secretary.* No, sir—nothing could have saved us. You have done all that could be done.

*Davis.* Thank you; thank you. We have believed in what we did. And now, we shall be called outlaws.

*Secretary.* Mr Lincoln will surely——

*Davis.* Mr Lincoln will be merciful. Think of that—merciful. For four years we have laboured, and spent, and died, and Mr Lincoln will be merciful. We should not have been made a proud people. Have the supplies from Kentucky come in ?

Robert E.  
Lee

*Secretary.* I'm afraid they must have been cut off, sir.

*Davis.* We can expect nothing. Take those papers to Mr Farrington.

*[The Secretary collects the papers and goes. For a few moments Davis sits at the table, his face covered by his hands. Then the Secretary returns.]*

*Secretary.* Captain Buchanan, sir.

*[Buchanan comes in. He is from a broken army. The Secretary sits at another table.]*

*Davis.* You have brought a message from General Lee ?

*Buchanan.* Yes, sir.

*Davis.* Sit down, please. *[Buchanan does so.]*

*Davis.* Well ?

*Buchanan.* General Lee considers it necessary to abandon Petersburg to-morrow. He proposes to move in the direction of Amelia Court House.

*Davis.* That means the surrender of Richmond.

*Buchanan.* Yes, sir.

*Davis.* The General thinks it imperative ?

*Buchanan.* That or loss of the army, sir.

*Davis.* How did you get through ?

*Buchanan.* I was lucky, sir.

*Davis.* To-morrow, you say ?

*Buchanan.* Yes, sir. General Lee wishes me to inform you of our condition.

*Davis (shrinking).* Yes, yes, I know.

*Buchanan (as though reciting a message from memory).* Our men have been in action since Sunday. They have been without meat for three days—the worst days of this winter. They are suffering from reduced rations and scant clothing. Hail and sleet have been incessant. And the enemy's assaults go on day and night. General Lee has had to disperse his cavalry for want of forage. He fears that the physical strength of the men, even if their courage survives, must fail under this treatment. He wishes you to be prepared, sir, to hear of calamity at any time.

*Davis.* Can you get back to General Lee ?

*Buchanan.* I think so, sir.

*Davis.* Tell him I can do nothing.

*Buchanan (rising).* Yes, sir. [*He moves to go.*]

*Davis.* Captain Buchanan.



*Buchanan (turning).* Yes, sir.

Robert E.  
Lee

*Davis.* Tell him that. And say that I wish I could have served as nobly as he has done.

*Buchanan.* We worship him, sir. If it hadn't been for that, we couldn't have gone on.

*Davis.* I know. The South will always know.

*Buchanan.* But—you won't mind my saying it, sir ?

*Davis.* What ?

*Buchanan.* We all know what your burden has been, sir. General Lee has taught us that.

*Davis.* Good-bye.

*Buchanan.* Good-bye, sir. [*He goes.*]

*Davis (after a pause, suddenly rising).* Send out every available officer, and telegraph wherever you can. Let supplies be bought or borrowed, or what you will, but let them be got. I won't let them starve, do you hear ?

*Secretary (moving to Davis's table).* We have tried every possible quarter, sir.

*Davis.* Say that General Lee and his men are starving, say that if we allow that we shall not only be defeated, we shall be disgraced.

*Secretary.* Everybody knows, sir—everybody has given, given. All the supplies left are beyond our reach. They can't be brought, and we can't fetch them.

*Davis.* They must be got, and more men must be raised——

*Secretary.* You have just seen all the papers, sir. Those are the facts.

*Davis* (quietly). Yes . . . the facts. Ask the members of the Cabinet to meet me here at five o'clock. This Government is at an end. We are going into exile.

*[The Secretary goes out, while Davis remains standing as*

#### THE SCENE CLOSES

#### SCENE IX

*Two months later. The line of Lee's army in retreat, near Appomattox, April 9th, 1865, in the late afternoon. Outside Lee's tent.*

*Propped against a heap of debris, Duff Penner is lying with the remains of an overcoat covering him. On either side of him are seated David Peel and Ray Warrenton. All are in the last stages of fatigue and destitution.*

*Warrenton.* Any easier, Duff ?

*Penner.* I don't feel it much now. Funny, on the last day. How long have I been here ?

*Peel.* Over twenty-four hours. The doctor has just gone. Robert E. Lee

*Penner.* Whose tent is that ?

*Warrenton.* General Lee's.

*Peel.* Don't you remember, he had you brought here ?

*Penner.* So he did. It was kind of him. Did the doctor say anything about something to eat ?

*Peel.* Presently.

*Penner.* Oh, of course—there isn't anything, is there ?

*Peel.* There will be presently.

*Penner.* Yes, it's the last day, isn't it ? Has General Lee gone ?

*Warrenton.* They should be back soon. He's with Grant now.

*Penner.* Does the doctor think there's any chance ?

*Peel.* Of course he does—you're going to get through all right.

*Penner.* Am I ? Truth, you know.

*Warrenton.* We shall be able to move you this afternoon.

*Penner.* But will that help ? I don't feel—am I going to die ?

*Warrenton.* David told you no.

*Penner.* Yes, you did, David.

*Peel.* Really, Duff, old chap. It's missed the backbone all right. As soon as we can get you into proper quarters, you'll pull together in no time.

*Penner.* I'm a coward to worry about it. All the army is dying to-day really, isn't it ?

*Peel.* It's coming to an end.

*Penner.* Yes, dying.

*Peel.* Beginning to live, perhaps.

*Penner.* Lee's army. Lee of Virginia.

*Warrenton.* I'm glad I've done that for the Warrentons.

*Penner.* Have you fellows been looking after me ever since I was hit ?

*Peel.* We've just been watching you.

*Penner.* You're very good. I suppose the old banjo has gone.

*Warrenton.* I'm afraid so, Duff.

*Penner.* I'm sorry. Old Jeb gave it me, after the other one got smashed up. Aren't you fellows hungry ?

*Warrenton.* David and I have discussed the matter for several hours, and have decided that we are not.

*Penner.* I suppose you don't know the terms of surrender ?

*Peel.* No, but a little food is about all we can hope for. And then we have got to build a world for ourselves. Robert E. Lee

*Warrenton.* Out of nothing.

*Peel.* Out of a memory. There are worse foundations.

*Penner.* It's very unfortunate about that banjo. It had a lot of memories. You know—— (*He sings softly*)

I wish I was in the land of cotton,  
Cinnamon seed and sandy bottom.  
To the land, to the land, to the land, to the land ;  
In Dixie's land where I was born,  
Early on one frosty morn.  
To the land, to the land, to the land, to the land ;  
I wish I was in Dixie.

[*As he finishes some troops near by take up the song, and Peel and Warrenton join in. At the end Penner suddenly holds out an arm to Peel.*]

*Penner.* David, David boy — it wasn't the truth——

*Peel* (*tending him*). There, there, it's all right.

*Penner.* No—the doctor was wrong—I'm——

*Peel* (*lifting him into his arms*). Duff, it will go in a minute, don't be frightened.

*Penner.* No. I'm not frightened. I'm dying.

*Warrenton (to Peel).* What can we do ?

*Penner.* Good-bye, Ray, old fellow—good-bye, David—we've had great times—I wish I could have seen General Lee, say good-bye to him for me. Give my love to old Tom.

*[He falls back in Peel's arms, and dies.]*

*Peel (passionately).* Duff—Duff—Duff. He's dead. Just thrown away—a little warmth and attention could have done it, and he couldn't have them.

*Warrenton.* He saved my life—that day at Frazier's—and I could do nothing but sit here useless hour after hour. He was a great old Duff. After four years . . .

*Peel.* There's no bitterness for him now.

*[Very tenderly he covers Penner's body and face with the coat.]*

*Warrenton.* Bitterness ? We are too tired.

*Peel.* That is what we shall have to fight now, in ourselves, in our children, perhaps. Just lean, dull days are coming—they breed it.

*Warrenton.* You said we should have to build—on a memory.

*Peel.* If we can keep the memory a clean one. Duff won't know that struggle.

*[Lee comes in slowly, followed by his Aide and*

*Buchanan. Peel and Warrenton stand at attention.* Robert E. Lee

*Lee.* You needn't do that. Rest. (*Seeing Penner's body*) What's this?

*Peel.* He's dead, sir. He wanted to say good-bye to you.

[*Lee stands silently by the body for a moment, then speaks to the Aide.*]

*Lee.* I'll just finish that report. Will you wait, Tom? I want you to take down an order directly.

[*He goes into the tent, followed by the Aide.*]

*Buchanan (kneeling by Penner).* Duff, old friend.

*Warrenton.* He sent his love to you.

*Buchanan.* He hadn't a fair chance.

*Peel.* We could do nothing.

*Buchanan (standing up).* Well, it's all over.

*Peel.* What happened?

*Buchanan.* The General was superb. No political matters were mentioned. Grant behaved very well. But we've lost pretty near everything, David.

*Warrenton.* What are we to do?

*Buchanan.* I think we are to go home.

*Warrenton.* Home. There isn't a Mount Weston any more. Sherman has been there.

*Peel.* Did the General say anything, afterwards?

*Buchanan.* Not a word all the way back.

*Warrenton.* Do you think he knows how much we love him ?

*Buchanan.* I'm sure he does, and yet he's terribly alone.

*Peel.* The story that you are going to be doesn't help much, does it ? His Mount Westons are so many, Ray. It's almost like . . .

*Warrenton.* I know.

*Buchanan.* Rations are to be served at six o'clock this evening. Full rations.

*Peel.* The funeral baked meats.

*Warrenton.* I'll go and get them to move Duff.

*[He goes.]*

*[Lee comes to the tent opening.]*

*Lee.* That will do. Take it at once, will you, please ?

*[The Aide comes from the tent, carrying his papers, and goes.]*

*Lee* (after walking two or three times up and down in front of the tent). It's getting warm again. Almost like that night at Arlington, four years ago. (Again he walks to and fro, silently.) Tom, will you take this down, please ?

*[Buchanan goes into the tent.]*

*Peel.* Shall I go, sir ?

*Lee.* No. It's for everybody.

*[Buchanan brings a seat to the tent opening]*



*and sits with pencil and paper. Peel sits* Robert E.  
*beside Penner's body.* Lee

*Lee (dictating as he walks).* "Headquarters Army of Northern Virginia. April 10th, 1865. General Order No. 9. After four years of arduous service marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources.

"I need not tell the survivors of so many hard-fought battles who have remained steadfast to the last that I have consented to this result from no distrust of them; but feeling that valour and devotion could accomplish nothing that would compensate for the loss that must have attended the continuance of the contest, I determined to avoid useless sacrifice of those whose past services have endeared them to their countrymen. By the terms of the agreement, officers and men can return to their homes and remain until exchanged.

"You may take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed, and I earnestly pray that a merciful God will extend to you His blessing and protection.

"With an unceasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration of myself, I bid you all an affectionate farewell."

[*He stands still as he finishes, Buchanan goes into the tent. Daylight is going.*

*Peel* (*standing up*). You know, sir, we would have gone on for you.

*Lee*. My boy.

*Peel*. Yes, sir—clothes and food and boots didn't matter—we would have gone on.

*Lee*. I know. I have seen it. But it couldn't have changed anything. We should have dwindled away, and there wouldn't have been even this little waif of an army to send back. There is other service now. (*Moving to Penner*) Poor Duff.

*Peel*. I think so often of what you said that night at Arlington, sir. "You may be wiser than Virginia," you said, "but your wisdom doesn't matter till she doesn't need you any more in her quarrel." Is the quarrel over now, sir?

*Lee*. To learn that, to teach it—that is the other service. Duff and his thousands have given their all for the quarrel. They have died for Virginia. We live, and again we are just Virginians no longer. We were that, and we, too, would have died for it. But we have now to live for America.

*Peel*. But will they let us?

*Lee*. We asked no leave four years ago—we shall ask none now. We believed in ourselves. The answer has been given. But we have the courage

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still that we had then. We used it for Virginia— Robert E.  
we shall use it for America. We have no choice— Lee  
I do not think that we now should ask or want any.  
We can only build our South again, and find our  
own hearts, in that service. We had a loyalty, we  
have a loyalty. Virginia knows us, she will know  
us for ever. But we are Americans once more.  
We must not dispute about it.

*Peel.* I see, yes—to learn and to teach.

*[Buchanan comes from the tent, a paper in his hand.]*

*Buchanan.* Will you read that over, sir.

*Lee.* Yes. Thank you.

*[He takes the paper and goes into the tent.]*

*Peel.* If he could speak to every man in this land  
of ours.

*Buchanan.* He will.

*[After a moment, Warrenton comes back.]*

*Warrenton.* They are coming to fetch Duff.

*[It is now dusk. A light comes from the tent.]*

*Peel.* The dead, and a memory, and a hope. A  
name—Robert E. Lee. To-morrow we are going  
home. *(He takes their hands.)* He is going with us.

*[As they stand by Penner's body]*

THE SCENE CLOSES



# *Little Johnny*

THE CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF THEIR  
APPEARANCE ARE—

THOMAS QUALE  
ELLEN QUALE, *his Wife*  
JANE QUALE, *his Daughter*  
MARTHA QUALE, *his Mother*  
WILLIAM SHARP  
MRS TOLLER, *his Sister*  
A DOCTOR  
THE PRISONER  
A K.C.  
MR BYNG (*for the Defence*)  
THE JUDGE  
SERGEANT PRICE  
A CLERK  
AN USHER

*Counsel, Barristers, Jurymen, Clerks, Ushers, etc.*

*Note.*—In stage production the jury difficulty could be got over by showing only the end of the jury-box on the stage with the foreman and perhaps two other jurors, the rest being managed by conversation off the stage.

## *Little Johnny*

*The Assize Court in a small county town in the South of England, about 1820. It is an afternoon of the Winter Assizes.*

*The twelfth man of a Jury, consisting of farmers, small tradesmen, and one or two of the gentry, is being sworn in. Two or three Counsel are at their papers, and one is speaking to the Judge. On Counsel's table are an old cloth cap, a woollen muffler, and a dull red ball of wound worsted.*

*Along the Witnesses' bench are seated a girl of sixteen, a woman of thirty-eight, a man of forty-five, being Thomas Quale, a farmer, his wife and daughter; William Sharp, his young carter of twenty; Mrs Toller, Quale's sister, a woman of fifty; Mrs Quale, his mother, nearly eighty; and a Doctor.*

*The K.C. leaves his consultation with the Judge and returns to his seat. As he fingers the articles of evidence before him and talks to a young Barrister at his side, the Clerk speaks.*

*The Clerk. Bring up the prisoner, James Bennett.*

*[The Prisoner is brought into the dock. He is a lean-faced, unshaven tramp, tall, hungry, and quick-eyed.*

*The Clerk.* James Bennett, you are charged that on the afternoon of Tuesday, August the twenty-ninth of this present year, between the hours of two and five in the afternoon, you did feloniously and wilfully murder John Quale, aged eleven, by Weston Coppice, in the hundred of Palebury, in the county of Wiltshire. Are you guilty or not guilty ?

*The Prisoner.* Not guilty.

*The K.C. (who has been speaking to the Judge, rising).* My lord, gentlemen of the jury. I shall show that on the said Tuesday, August the twenty-ninth, the boy John Quale left his home at Palebury at two o'clock. His mother told him to return at three. He did not do so, and two hours later, his father Thomas Quale, his daughter Jane, and William Sharp, Quale's carter, went out to look for him. The places where the boy was used to play were well known to them, and at half-past five the father found the boy's body in a ditch on the south side of Weston Coppice. Medical evidence shows that death was due to strangulation. The police, who if I may say so have handled this case with great acumen (*this to a florid Sergeant, who takes a glance from the Court*), for a time were at a loss. There was no one upon whom suspicion could possibly fall, nor had anyone been seen in the



boy's company, though three or four witnesses had seen him walking in the direction of the Coppice. The only clue was in certain articles of clothing, and a toy, that were missing. The prisoner, James Bennett, was known to have been in the district for some ten days, and the police, with what you will in due time I think agree with me was remarkable intuition, arrested him on the evening of August the thirty-first. Questioned as to his movements on the afternoon of the twenty-ninth, he said that he was at Skardon, a place ten miles distant, but he has been unable to produce any evidence in support of that testimony, and William Sharp will tell you that he saw him on that afternoon in the neighbourhood of Quale's Farm. When he was arrested—and this, my lord, gentlemen of the jury, is the sum of my story—he had in his possession a cloth cap, a woollen muffler, and a red worsted ball, as to each of which you will hear a succession of witnesses tell you, upon oath, that they belonged to John Quale, and that he had them with him when he left home on that fatal afternoon. The prisoner has offered no satisfactory explanation as to how he came by these things. It is not for me, my lord, gentlemen of the jury, to discover motives, nor do I pretend to say why a guilty man should carry about with

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Johnny

him incriminating evidence of this kind. It is, rather, for the defence to explain why the prisoner should lie as to his whereabouts on the afternoon of the crime, and to make plausible at once his innocence and his possession of these things from the murdered boy's body. To do that, I suggest, will tax the ingenuity even of my learned friend.

Sergeant Price. [*The florid Sergeant is sworn*

*The K.C.* When did you arrest the prisoner ?

*The Sergeant.* At seven o'clock on the evening of Thursday, August the thirty-first.

*The K.C.* Did you charge him with the murder of John Quale ?

*The Sergeant.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* What did he say ?

*The Sergeant.* He denied the charge, sir.

*The K.C.* And then ?

*The Sergeant.* That he was at Skardon on the afternoon of August the twenty-ninth.

*The K.C.* What did you find on him ?

*The Sergeant.* Among other things, sir, a cloth cap, a woollen muffler, and a red worsted ball.

*The K.C.* Were these the articles ?

*The Sergeant (examining them).* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* Thank you.

*Mr Byng (for the defence).* I have nothing to ask.

[*The Sergeant leaves the box.*

*The K.C.* Dr Spence, please.

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[*The Doctor goes into the box and is sworn.* Johnny

*The K.C.* You are Dr Laidlaw Spence ?

*The Doctor.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* Were you called in the early evening of Tuesday, August the twenty-ninth, to Quale's Farm at Palebury, and did you arrive at six o'clock, and did you there examine the dead body of the boy John Quale ?

*The Doctor.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* To what conclusion did you come ?

*The Doctor.* That he had been dead at least three and at most four hours, and that he had been strangled.

*The K.C.* Thank you, doctor.

[*The K.C. sits as Mr Byng, counsel for the defence, rises. He is large, confident, loud, but bland at will.*

*Mr Byng.* Strangulation, you say, doctor ?

*The Doctor.* Unquestionably.

*Mr Byng.* Quite so. Yes. Er — quite so. Thank you, Doctor—er Dr Laidlaw Spence, yes. Thank you.

[*The Doctor leaves the box.*

*The K.C.* William Sharp, please.

[*The young carter is sworn. He is slow, not very bright, but sure of his answers.*

*The K.C.* You are William Sharp, Mr Quale's carter ?

*Sharp.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* Have you ever seen the prisoner before ?

*Sharp.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* Where and when ?

*Sharp.* Often, in the village and about, sir.

*The K.C.* Did you see him on Tuesday afternoon, August the twenty-ninth ?

*Sharp.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* Where ?

*Sharp.* Passing by Quale's Farm, sir.

*The K.C.* At what hour ?

*Sharp.* About half-past one, sir. I'd just finished my dinner.

*The K.C.* That is all, thank you.

[*He sits, and Mr Byng rises.*]

*Mr Byng.* Are you sure it was the prisoner ?

*Sharp.* Yes, sir.

*Mr Byng.* How ?

*Sharp.* When I sees a man, I know.

*Mr Byng.* William Sharp is your name, eh ?

Very well, young man, you may go.

*The K.C.* (*rising as Mr Byng sits*). Thomas Quale.

[*Thomas Quale goes into the witness-box and is sworn.*]

*The K.C.* Your name is Thomas Quale ?

*Quale.* Yes, sir.

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Johnny

*The K.C.* John Quale was your son ?

*Quale.* Yes, sir, little Johnny were my son.

*The K.C.* On Tuesday, August the twenty-ninth, did your family have dinner together at one o'clock, and was little—er, your son John with you ?

*Quale.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* And after dinner did he ask to be allowed to go out and play ?

*Quale.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* And what happened ?

*Quale.* Little Johnny's mother—that's my wife, sir—told him he could go, and that he were to be back at three.

*The K.C.* When he left was the family still at table ?

*Quale.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* You saw him go out ?

*Quale.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* Did he put a cap on ?

*Quale.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* Was that the cap ? Look carefully.

*[It is handed up to Quale, who examines it, and hands it back.]*

*Quale.* Yes, sir, that were the cap.

*The K.C.* Did he put on a muffler ?

*Quale.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* That muffler ?

[*The formality is repeated.*]

*Quale.* Yes, sir, that were the muffler.

*The K.C.* Did you notice that he took anything else in particular ?

*Quale.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* What ?

*Quale.* He went to a cupboard and took out a ball from the top shelf. He had to stand on a stool.

*The K.C.* Was that the ball ? [*It is banded up.*]

*Quale.* Yes, sir, that were the ball.

*The K.C.* Now tell us what happened then.

*Quale.* Little Johnny didn't come back at three. It was near four when his mother came out to the barn, where I were working with William Sharp there. She were all of a flurry, and though I weren't uneasy myself, sir, I must say that Johnny were never later than he were told. So William Sharp went down Bagnall way and I went with my girl Jane up to Weston, and I asked Mr Dollins—that's my neighbour at the Marshes, sir—if he'd seen little Johnny go that way, and he said, yes, and so did Jonas and Thisbe up in the field beyond. So I went on, and walked round the Coppice, and

in the ditch at top of Square Meadow I found him. He were dead, sir. Little  
Johnny

*The K.C.* Did you notice anything particularly ?

*Quale.* Only that he were dead, sir.

*The K.C.* Any disorder ?

*Quale.* I can't say that I noticed anything just then, sir. But afterwards I saw he hadn't his cap on, and the muffler had gone from his neck.

*The K.C.* And the ball ?

*Quale.* We didn't think about that, sir, until it were shown to us after the prisoner had been arrested.

*The K.C.* And your daughter Jane was with you when you found the body ?

*Quale.* She were, sir, poor lass.

*The K.C.* Thank you.

*[He sits, and Mr Byng rises.]*

*Mr Byng.* Thomas Quale, I am entirely sensitive of the very painful position in which you are placed. A sorrow has fallen upon your life which must move the coldest heart. But this is a court of justice, and it is my duty to ask such questions as I may think will serve the interests of justice. Ahem. And, my lord, gentlemen of the jury, I should like here to make one or two general observations which may be a prelude, as it were, to what I may have to say at the close of this trial. Yes.

My learned friend for the prosecution has laid stress on the fact that the prisoner asserts that he was some miles away from the scene of the crime at the hour of its committal, whereas he produces a witness to show that the prisoner was in fact in the—er—guilty neighbourhood, as you may say. The witness is entirely unsupported, and, although his name is William Sharp, I venture to suppose that, ahem, he can hardly have impressed you, gentlemen, with any marked quality of intelligence. But be that as it may, gentlemen, it would be a thing within the experience of every criminal court for an innocent man to make a statement upon arrest that belied the facts. And in any case, I should like here to say that the defence does not propose to follow this line at all. Allow the prisoner, if you will, to have been in the neighbourhood of Palebury on the afternoon in question. The salient point is this. All the prosecution can bring against my client is that he had, at the time of his arrest, certain articles presumed to have been taken from the body of little Johnny. While I cannot admit that, even if this were so, it would be conclusive, I allow that you might, gentlemen, be prejudiced against the prisoner by this circumstance. But, since this is the sole support upon which the prosecution relies, it must at least be



clear that my learned friend should establish Little  
beyond any question that these things, taken from Johnny  
the boy's body, were in fact in the prisoner's  
possession at the time of arrest. If I am able to  
discredit this suggestion, then, I submit, there is  
no possible case against the prisoner. It will be  
my business to ask the witness now before you  
certain questions with this submission in view, and,  
if I may read the mind of the prosecution, so to  
examine later witnesses as well. Quite so. Thomas  
Quale, I am concerned with but one part of your  
evidence. Will you please take that cap in your  
hand. (*The cap is given to Quale.*) You say that  
it belonged to little Johnny?

*Quale.* Yes, sir.

*Mr Byng.* Is there any distinguishing mark  
upon it?

*Quale.* Mark, sir?

*Mr Byng.* Mark was the word, sir.

*Quale.* This were little Johnny's cap, sir.

*Mr Byng.* A very ordinary kind of cap, Mr  
Quale, if I may say so.

*Quale.* I suppose it is, sir.

*Mr Byng.* Some dozens of caps like that must be  
sold every month in Salisbury?

*Quale.* Yes, I suppose they might be, sir.

*Mr Byng.* You know they must be. Come, now.

*Quale.* That would be so, I've no doubt, sir.

*Mr Byng.* Thomas Quale, you are on oath.

*Quale.* Yes, sir.

*Mr Byng.* Do you swear that that cap belonged to little Johnny ?

*Quale.* Yes, sir.

*Mr Byng.* Can you swear that the cap could not have belonged to some other little boy ?

*Quale.* How's that, sir ?

*Mr Byng.* Be careful now, Quale. That very ordinary cap—can you swear that it did not belong to some other little boy ?

*Quale.* Well, sir——

*Mr Byng.* Can you ?

*Quale.* Well, sir, of course——

*Mr Byng.* Answer my question. Can you ?

*Quale.* Not to swear it, so to speak——

*Mr Byng.* Thank you. Look at that muffler. (*The muffler is handed up.*) Is there any distinguishing mark upon it ?

*Quale.* No, sir.

*Mr Byng.* Do you swear it was little Johnny's ?

*Quale.* It were little Johnny's.

*Mr Byng* (*holding up a cardboard box*). You see this box ?

*Quale.* Yes, sir.

*Mr Byng* (*opening it*). It contains six mufflers.

It was bought in Salisbury yesterday. Evidence Little  
Johnny  
will be called to show that twenty such boxes could have been bought there any time these three years past. Each of these mufflers is identical with the one in your hand. Now, Mr Quale, do you swear that that muffler in your hand could not have belonged to some little boy other than little Johnny ?

*Quale.* If you put it like that, sir——

*Mr Byng.* I do put it like that, sir.

*Quale.* It's difficult to say——

*Mr Byng.* You did not find it difficult to swear.

*Quale.* I were sure of it.

*Mr Byng.* Are you sure now ?

*Quale.* Sure, as you might say, sir.

*Mr Byng.* Come now. You swore that that muffler belonged to little Johnny. After seeing that box and hearing what I have said, can you now swear that it could have belonged to no other little boy ?

*Quale.* Well, no, sir.

*Mr Byng.* Then how can you swear that it belonged to little Johnny ?

*Quale.* I don't know, sir.

*Mr Byng.* Thank you. Look at that ball. (*The ball is handed up.*) I understand that this is a plaything very common in your countryside. Here

I have a selection of them. (*He produces half a dozen balls indistinguishable from the one in evidence.*)  
Can you tell one from the other ?

*Quale.* I couldn't say that, sir.

*Mr Byng.* You have sworn that the one you have was little Johnny's.

*Quale.* Yes, sir.

*Mr Byng.* How could you do that ?

*Quale.* I thought——

*Mr Byng.* You thought—you swore it.

*Quale.* You see, sir——

*Mr Byng.* That will do, Quale, thank you.

[*He sits, and Quale leaves the box.*]

*The K.C. (rising).* Jane Quale.

[*The girl goes into the box and is sworn.*]

*The K.C.* You are Jane Quale, sister of John Quale ?

*Jane.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* You heard what your father said about finding your brother. Was that the truth ?

*Jane.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* You see these three things. Do you recognise them ?

*Jane.* They were my brother's.

*The K.C.* You are sure ?

*Jane (with a glance at Byng).* I think so, sir.

*The K.C.* Thank you. [*He sits.*]

*Mr Byng (rising).* You think so, Jane ?

*Jane.* Yes, sir.

Little  
Johnny

*Mr Byng.* My lord, I submit——

*The Judge.* Yes, yes, I follow you, Mr Byng. It is not necessary to go over your point again.

*Mr Byng.* Quite so, my lord. Thank you, Jane, you may go. [*He sits. Jane leaves the box.*]

*The K.C. (rising).* Ellen Quale.

[*Mrs Quale, Johnny's mother, is sworn.*]

*The K.C.* You are Ellen Quale, the dead boy's mother ?

*Ellen.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* You corroborate your husband's evidence as to your son's leaving home on Tuesday afternoon, August the twenty-ninth, at two o'clock ?

*Ellen.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* Wearing a cloth cap, a woollen muffler, and taking a worsted ball, a plaything ?

*Ellen.* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* Were these the cap, the muffler, and the ball ?

*Ellen (examining them).* Yes, sir.

*The K.C.* How do you know ?

*Ellen.* I've seen them a hundred times, sir.

*The K.C.* But you have heard what my learned friend says. How are you sure ?

*Ellen.* A mother knows, sir.

*The K.C.* You have no doubt ?

*Ellen.* None at all, sir.

*The K.C.* Thank you.

[*He sits.*]

*Mr Byng (rising).* Mrs Quale, I want to spare you as much as possible. I am sure that I respect the wishes of the Court in that. But a man is being tried for his life, and at the moment his interests must stand even before a mother's feelings, Mrs Quale. You say that you are sure that these things were little Johnny's. Why do you say that ?

*Ellen.* I know by the look of them, sir, I might say the touch. I've put that muffler round Johnny's neck many's the time.

*Mr Byng.* You are sure, that muffler ?

*Ellen.* As though it were my own bodice, sir.

*Mr Byng.* And you are sure, too, about the cap and the ball ?

*Ellen.* Quite, sir.

*Mr Byng.* Will you kindly hand me the ball ? (*She does so.*) Now in this ball I stick a black pin, thus. (*He does so, and takes two of the other balls in front of him.*) Now, here are three balls. (*He makes a few passes with them in his hands, walks up to the witness-box, and places the three balls on the shelf in front of her.*) Will you kindly tell the jury which of those balls was little Johnny's ?

*The K.C. (rising).* My lord, I protest——

Little

*The Judge.* I think it must be allowed, Mr Johnny

Turvey.

*Mr Byng.* Which one ?

*Ellen (hesitating).* I think that—no, that one.

*Mr Byng.* Exactly. Will you please take that ball up ? (*She does so.*) Will you please draw out that pin ?

[*Ellen looks for it in vain.*

*Ellen.* It isn't here, sir.

*Mr Byng.* It is not, Mrs Quale. Because that is not the ball that you have sworn was little Johnny's. This is the one, and here is the pin. (*He draws it out and returns to his seat.*) Gentlemen of the jury, I do not think that I need ask this witness any further questions. Thank you, Mrs Quale, that will do. [*He sits.*

[*Mrs Quale leaves the box.*

*The K.C. (rising).* My lord, gentlemen of the jury, I have two further witnesses, John Quale's aunt and his grandmother, in support of the evidence already given. But in view of the line taken by the learned counsel for the defence, I do not propose to put them into the box.

*Old Mrs Quale.* Eh ?—what's that—aren't I to be heard ? Those things were little Johnny's——

*An Usher.* Silence in court.

*The K.C.* Enough has been said to enable you, gentlemen of the jury, to form your own conclusions. The ingenious attempt of my learned friend to discredit evidence that has on every word the stamp of conviction is in itself, I submit, proof of the weakness of his case.

*Old Mrs Quale.* He knows they were little Johnny's.

*An Usher.* Silence in court.

*The K.C.* If you believe these articles found on the prisoner to have belonged to John Quale, gentlemen, you are likely to have little hesitation in connecting that fact with his guilt.

*Old Mrs Quale.* Why aren't I to be heard ?

*The K.C.* My lord, this witness's anxiety is due to the fact that John Quale was her favourite among many grandchildren.

*Old Mrs Quale.* He were that, sir.

*The K.C.* Perhaps, on second thoughts, the jury would be interested to hear her. Her own certainty may help them. Mrs Martha Quale.

[*Old Mrs Quale goes into the box and is sworn. She is infirm, slow in answer, a little slow in the wits.*]

*The K.C.* You are Martha Quale, John Quale's grandmother ?

*Old Mrs Quale.* That's Martha Quale, sir.



*The K.C.* You live with your son, Thomas Little  
Johnny  
Quale ?

*Old Mrs Quale.* I pay four shillings a week, be it understood.

*The K.C.* And you saw your grandson John leave Quale's Farm on Tuesday afternoon, August the twenty-ninth, at two o'clock ?

*Old Mrs Quale.* Aye.

*The K.C.* He was wearing a cap, a muffler, and he took his ball with him ?

*Old Mrs Quale.* Those be they (*pointing to them*).

*The K.C.* Look at them closely. (*They are handed to her, and she puts on her spectacles, and examines them.*) Are you sure ?

*Old Mrs Quale.* If I was saying it to God Almighty, I am.

*The K.C.* Thank you. [*He sits.*]

*Mr Byng (rising).* My lord, gentlemen of the jury, the barren nature of the prosecution becomes more apparent at every turn. This reiterated certainty that dwindles away immediately it is questioned grows a little tiresome, if I may say so. Yes. My learned friend refers to what he is pleased to call my ingenuity. But he knows very well the weakness against which that ingenuity is directed. On the prisoner, he asserts, were found three things belonging to the murdered boy.

Beyond that he has nothing to offer in support of his case, nothing. I allow, as I said before, gentlemen, that if beyond any shadow of doubt this point were proved, I should have some uneasiness as to your decision. But this point at least must be so proved beyond a shadow of doubt before there is even a case to go to you. Without that, which man among you dare take the responsibility of sending the prisoner to a felon's death? I venture to believe, not one. And has a single witness under cross-examination been able to stand by his oath that these things were little Johnny's? You have heard each of them, and each of them has had to admit that their ready certainty was no more than surmise at best. And now another is put up before you, with the same assurance, to tell you what has already been told, as I submit, to no purpose. Patience, gentlemen, is a virtue, but mine is at an end. Martha Quale, you are little Johnny's grandmother?

*Old Mrs Quale.* Little Johnny be dead, sir. There be the man that killed him.

*Mr Byng.* Answer my questions, please. He was your grandson?

*Old Mrs Quale.* He were my grandson.

*Mr Byng.* You swear that that cap was his?

*Old Mrs Quale.* I do.

*Mr Byng.* My lord, gentlemen of the jury, I did not wish to weary you before with redundancy of example. But the prosecution persists in its own discrediting. (*He produces another cardboard box, and opens it.*) Here is a box of caps, also bought yesterday in Salisbury. The pattern has been a stock one for five years. It is identical with that of the cap in your hand, Mrs Quale. Now, do you swear that that cap could not have belonged to some other little boy ?

*Old Mrs Quale.* It belonged to little Johnny. I am sure of that.

*Mr Byng.* My good woman——

*Old Mrs Quale.* I'm not your good woman, and if I was a bad woman I wouldn't be yours.

*Mr Byng.* Attend to my questions, please.

*Old Mrs Quale.* Then don't call me your good woman.

*Mr Byng.* Do you swear that this muffler was little Johnny's ?

*Old Mrs Quale.* I do.

*Mr Byng.* Do you swear it could not have belonged to some other little boy ?

*Old Mrs Quale.* I don't know that I——

*Mr Byng.* Do you swear it ?

*Old Mrs Quale.* I am sure it was my Johnny's.

*Mr Byng.* Very well. You swear that it was his, and you will not swear that it was not someone else's. The jury are accustomed to that by now. Was this ball little Johnny's ?

*Old Mrs Quale.* It was.

*Mr Byng.* Very like these others, isn't it ?

*Old Mrs Quale.* It may be.

*Mr Byng.* His mother could not tell one from the other.

*Old Mrs Quale.* Maybe not.

*Mr Byng.* But you can.

*Old Mrs Quale.* I can.

*Mr Byng.* My lord, gentlemen of the jury, I submit that this is scandalous. These people one after another are trying to swear this man's life away, and not one of them can support their evidence by a single circumstance, or answer the clear reasons that I advance why that evidence is wholly unreliable. "I am sure," "I am sure," for the twentieth time you hear that from the box. Martha Quale, you are an old woman. How will you answer at the judgment that so nearly waits you, if you are asked why you were so ready on a mere supposition to destroy this man ? You know this ball from another, you say. You must then have some means of knowing it. Why did you not tell your counsel what it was ?

*Old Mrs Quale.* He didn't ask me. Isn't it enough to say I know what I'm sure of ?

Little  
Johnny

*Mr Byng.* Again I tell you, no, it is not, and I venture to think that you will agree with me, gentlemen. Thank you, you can go. (*Old Mrs Quale turns to go.*) Or, stay a moment. Let me make one last exposure of the shameless method upon which the case against the prisoner has been built. You, Martha Quale, have sought to add a touch of conviction to your evidence by saying that you can tell this ball from any other, though nobody else could. Will you kindly tell the jury how you can do this ? Nothing could be of greater interest, eh, gentlemen ?

*Old Mrs Quale.* I know that ball belonged to little Johnny, because I made it. And I wound it up on a little three-cornered piece of black leather cut out of the sole of an old shoe. And if you unwind that ball you will find the piece of leather in the middle.

*The Judge.* Let me see the ball.

[*It is handed to him.*]

*Mr Byng.* My lord——

*The Judge.* No, Mr Byng, you must accept your own evidence. (*To the Clerk.*) Unwind the ball, please.

*[The Clerk takes the ball and unpicks an end of the wool, which he gives to the Sergeant. As the Clerk unwinds the ball between his hands the Sergeant winds it up into another. The court strains at attention. The prisoner, who has been utterly impassive throughout the trial, moves nervously in the dock. The Clerk at last comes to the end of his unwinding, and, holding up a three-cornered piece of black leather between his thumb and forefinger, exclaims.]*

*The Clerk.* By God, he's hanged. *(There is silence for some moments.)*

*The Judge.* Have you anything further to ask this witness, Mr Byng?

*Mr Byng.* I—er—I think not, my lord.

*The Judge.* Very well. You may go, Mrs Quale.

*[Old Mrs Quale leaves the box.]*

*The K.C. (rising).* My lord, gentlemen of the jury, on my learned friend's own showing. . . .

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS





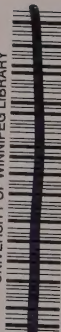








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